

The *Philosophy of Modern Music*:
Music in the Age
of
Mechanical Reproduction

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Declaration

This thesis has been composed by me and is the result of my own research.

Bhesham R. Sharma
Kingston, Canada, 1 October 1997

Abstract

Theodor Adorno's depiction of Stravinsky and Schoenberg in the *Philosophy of Modern Music* has been a source of much controversy. Many have criticised the Frankfurt Scholar for his biased portrayals. A common tendency shared among commentators has been to interpret Adorno's text literally. Yet upon closer examination, one sees that Adorno's intention was to write not only a literal text, but also a poetic text.

Following in the tradition of Karl Kraus, and Walter Benjamin, Adorno's text is laden with symbols, metaphors, allusions and allegories that encircle socio-cultural and historical issues. Stravinsky and Schoenberg are often caricatures, and their works a means to discuss kitsch and avant-garde art during the rise of fascism in Germany.

Even Adorno's portrayal of art in Germany is symbolic; his insights into state capitalist culture during World-War Two are meant to act as an acidic and prophetic analysis of monopoly capitalist culture in the post-World-War II era.

Adorno's *Philosophy of Modern Music* was meant to be a *Flaschenpost*, a 'message in a bottle', designed to remain rebarbative through time. This thesis suggests that when one applies his insights to late capitalist society, they seem more relevant than ever.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Benjamin Ward wrote in 1975,

When all of Adorno's prejudices and blind spots are acknowledged, *Philosophy of Modern Music* remains an imposing achievement - unsurpassed in the depth of its grasp of the dilemma of contemporary culture, and immensely moving in its passionate sympathy for the plight of a mankind well along the road to impotence, insignificance and perhaps even extinction.¹

Adorno offers us invaluable insights into the debilitating effect of late capitalism on intellectual and artistic creativity. Despite the salience of many of his ideas, controversy surrounds his works. His allegedly dogmatic portrayal of Stravinsky and Schoenberg in the *Philosophy of Modern Music* has been the source of much debate.

In criticising the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, the tendency in musicology has been to focus on the musicological and philosophical aspects of Adorno's 'sociology' of music.² When confronted with Adorno's debasing portrayal of Stravinsky and glorification of Schoenberg, many critics have attributed them to personal prejudices and cultural arrogance. As F. E. Sparshott remarks, "His opponents contend

¹ Book review of *Philosophy of Modern Music*. *Journal of Music Theory*, 19 (1975), 311.

² The phrase "sociology of music" seems inadequate in describing Adorno's musical and extra-musical discussions. In present day terminology, as ludicrous as it may sound, a "critical theory of music" might be more appropriate. See Max Paddison's socio-musicological discussion on Adorno's critical theory in *Adorno, Modernism and Mass Culture* (London: Kahn and Averill, 1996), pp. 1-44.

that his intolerance of anything simple reflected personal élitism, that his championing of Schoenberg . . . expressed a rationalised nostalgia for his schooldays."³

A literal reading of Adorno seems to convey cultural arrogance not only in the inflammatory remarks he makes concerning Stravinsky, but also in the cryptical manner in which he writes. Often, his insightful criticisms of Stravinsky and Schoenberg have been overlooked and obscured by the tendency to believe that they result from Adorno's prejudices.

It is possible, however, that some scholars may have been too hasty in condemning aspects of Adorno's writings. Some have neglected to consider why Adorno writes in the manner that he does. Some have ignored the various extra-musical issues he contends with in his writings on music. Others have neglected to consider the effect Adorno's own personal context as a German Jew in exile during the Holocaust had on his writings.

While the question of whether Adorno's racial heritage impacted on his musicological writing has rarely been taken into account in musicology, scholars outside the field such as Martin Jay,⁴ Donald Kuspit,⁵ and Gillian Rose⁶ have suggested that Adorno's Jewishness prejudiced his ideas. Neil Lazarus and Carl Freedman⁷ also contend that

³ "Adorno," in *The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1980), p. 112.

⁴ *Adorno* (London: Fontana, 1984).

⁵ "Adorno's Sociology of Music and Art," *New German Critique*, 33 (1975), 322-327.

⁶ Rose writes, "Adorno . . . never recovered from the war." See in *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno* (London: Macmillan, 1978), p. 7. Peter U. Hohendahl writes in "The Displaced Intellectual? Adorno's American Years Revisited," *New German Critique*, 56 (1992), "Adorno's complex and ambiguous attitude to America was rooted in his European and German *Weltanschauung*, his critical humanism that motivated him to reject modern America - its political order, its economic system, and particularly its culture," p. 76.

⁷ "The Mandarin Marxism of Adorno," *Rethinking Marxism*, 1 (Winter 1988), 85-111.

Adorno's approach to twentieth-century culture at its laxest, suffers from a bleak intellectual and political paralysis. This stultification is bound up with the effects of German fascism.

In contrast, Fredric Jameson⁸ argues that Adorno maintains his dialectical rigour. Despite tenuous circumstances, works such as *Minima Moralia* (1944) or the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947) (the latter from which the *Philosophy of Modern Music* is an excursus) reveal Adorno's brilliance and sobriety.⁹ While many outside of musicology debate the extent to which context affected Adorno's scholarship, few in the musicological canon have given this issue its deserved attention.

1. Problem

Is Adorno's antagonistic portrayal of Stravinsky and flattering portrayal of Schoenberg in the *Philosophy of Modern Music* (1940-1948) the result of cultural arrogance? Is it a consequence of his own temporal and spatial context as a German Jew in exile during the Holocaust? Is his polemical portrayal of Schoenberg and Stravinsky deliberate, a means to convey his theoretical insights on culture in (late) capitalist society?

2. Background

Theodor Adorno (1903-1969), arguably the most brilliant and versatile member of the Frankfurt School's first generation,¹⁰ employed dialectical

⁸ *Late Marxism: Adorno, or, The Persistence of the Dialectic* (London: Verso, 1990). Although less commending than is Jameson, Paddison writes in *Adorno, Modernism and Mass Culture*: "with all its limitations and blind spots, Adorno's Critical Theory retains its historical and theoretical relevance," p. 9.

⁹ By no means is this issue resolved. Raz Ueli scolds Heinz Steinert for confusing claims involving Adorno the man with Adorno the scholar. See Ueli's, "Heinz Steinert's Studies on Theodor W. Adorno's Intellectual and Musical Self-Consciousness," *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Soziologie* (January 1993), pp. 211-222.

¹⁰ R. Hausser, "Adorno," in the *Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thinkers*, eds. Alan Bullock, R.B. Woodings, and John Cumming (London: Collins, 1983), p. 11.

models which he called constellations [*Sternbilder*] and force-fields [*Kraftfelder*]¹¹ in his discussion on art in an attempt to dissolve,

. . . virtually all conceptual distinctions of identity, class consciousness, 'positiveness', intentionality of signification, while insisting on the power of those heterogeneous fragments that slip through the conceptual net.¹²

Adorno's elliptical, paratactical literary style included shock, irony, exaggerations and allusions. He used such devices to criticise both art and the language used to discuss culture. Concentrating primarily on reified¹³ ideologies which he ascribed to traditional Western music-making in twentieth century society, Adorno explored its tendencies to impose and reinforce on the masses that which he considered tribalistic behaviour.

To Adorno, German fascist cultural administrations of the 1920s-1945 paralleled the American culture industry (ca. 1940-). Both, for example, use(d) psycho-technology to sell products and ideology to the proletariat. Both used reproductive media to transform self-debilitating behaviour into socially acceptable conduct.¹⁴

¹¹ In *Adorno*, Martin Jay describes Adorno's two favourite metaphors in the following manner: "The first of these is the force-field (*Kraftfeld*), by which Adorno meant a relational interplay of attractions and aversions that constituted the dynamic, transmutational structure of a complex phenomenon," pp. 14-15.

¹² Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), p. 140.

¹³ Adorno transforms "reification" from its social meaning in Marx to include 'rigidified' thinking. In *The Melancholy Science*, Rose defines Adorno's peculiar transformations of this and other concepts. See pages 149-153.

¹⁴ With reference to both democratic and fascist culture, Adorno and Horkheimer write:

The stronger the positions of the culture industry become, the more summarily it can deal with consumers' needs, producing them, controlling them, disciplining them, and even withdrawing amusement: no limits are set to cultural progress of this kind,

In most of his writings on twentieth-century music, Adorno took Schoenberg's musical works as the model of artistic and social achievement against which he criticised all other works. He even modelled aspects of his cryptical writing style after Schoenberg's atonality - in an attempt to avoid pathologies identified by the likes of Benjamin, Freud, Hegel, Kraus, Le Bon, Lukacs and Nietzsche. Adorno believed that Schoenberg's music shattered autocratic behaviour through its cathartic qualities.

By taking an active part in Schoenberg's musical creations, Adorno argues, the listener begins to reclaim 'himself'.¹⁵ The listener discovers his neglected emotional self and awakens to panacea of commodified mass culture to which he once subscribed. The listener begins to experience his (true) isolation and becomes aware of his naive allegiance to the authoritative dictates of monopoly and state capitalists.

In the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno attempts to create a text that duplicates the qualities he perceives in Schoenberg's music. By writing in a fragmented manner, he hopes that the reader asserts himself onto the text. He hopes that even the reader's hostile abreactions encourages him to a desire for truth, fluid truth comprising of both chaos and order, beyond Adorno's literal claims. Unlike authoritative language which dictates truth, Adorno forces the reader to discover truth through active participation. The reader's self-assertion leads to an awakening to his own subjective, intellectual and creative impulses. Self-assertion wars against atrophic, collective behaviour.

Dialectic of Enlightenment, trans. John Cumming (New York: Pantheon, 1972), p. 144.

¹⁵ Caveat: To be fair to all sides in the debate over politically correct language, I have used the most common forms in vogue. Adorno customarily refers to woman and man as 'man'. Many North American scholars now use plural pronouns with singular antecedents.

Adorno's insistence on the active participation of the reader, the scholar's alleged hostility towards rational and empirical language have been sources of much incomprehension even derogation. As Tibor Knief states:

Adorno's ingenious ideas stood in part at a great distance from historical reality, and this is one of the reasons that a certain disenchantment with - indeed, even scepticism towards - the field [sociology of music] is to be observed . . . today.¹⁶

But while critical summaries have glossed the effectiveness of Adorno's writings, the focus has been more on Adorno's 'texts' and less on his 'contexts'. As I will show, Adorno's ingenious ideas are remarkably illuminating when considered in relation to German cultural history, and timely when considered as prophecies on late capitalist society. Indeed, the predominant tendency in musicology to interpret Adorno's controversial *Philosophy of Modern Music* literally adds to misconceptions. As Jameson,¹⁷ Gillian Rose,¹⁸ and Susan Buck-Morss¹⁹ argue, reading Adorno's texts requires a methodology, a particular approach. Without this, his text(s) might easily be misconstrued.

3. Purpose

This thesis reinterprets the *Philosophy of Modern Music*. It shows how Adorno uses the music of Schoenberg and Stravinsky to trace the history

¹⁶ Information in a letter to Wes Blomster (30 August, 1975). Quoted in Blomster's "Adorno and Beyond," *Telos*, 27 (1978), 89.

¹⁷ *Late Marxism*.

¹⁸ *Melancholy Science*.

¹⁹ *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute* (Hassocks: Harvester Press, 1977).

of 'humanitarian' German avant-garde art and 'inhumane' kitsch art from the start of Expressionism to the 1940s. It shows that while Schoenberg and Stravinsky are the main characters of the book, ultimately, they are but caricatures, intended to be ideal representatives of these two streams of art. Whether or not his discussions concerning these composers are valid at the literal level is of minor importance. What seems more significant to Adorno is whether his 'pure insights' into the debilitating and enlightening elements of culture in (late) capitalism are transcendental, a *Flaschenpost*. Even Adorno's focus on the German context is a metaphor. His insights into the racist, sado-masochistic, dissociating elements of state capitalist Nazi society are meant to serve as a parallel to 'monopoly capitalist culture' in the post-World War Two era.

4. Hypothesis

I will also show that although his life experiences affected his work, Adorno maintains his dialectical rigour. In a desperate attempt to bring world attention to the plight of the Jews, Adorno sharpens his criticisms of Stravinsky and Schoenberg so as to shock the reader out of their coopted, indifferent or hostile state. At another level, he suggests how fascist culture turned the Germans - Beethoven's people - into Hitler's people. At the symbolic level, however, the 'misled' Germans come to represent us, also victims of capitalism.

The *Philosophy of Modern Music* informs us of the individual's present road to extinction under the effects of capitalism. It provides a theoretical analysis of fascist culture in (late) capitalist society, and even hints at ways in which one can resist its debilitating effects.

5. Scope and Limitations

Indeed, Adorno's book displays the influence of many writers and philosophers. In my review of his style in Chapter Two, and critical theoretical ideas in Chapter Three, I deal only with those influences and issues that reveal themselves prominently in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*. In addition, I highlight his metaphorical critique of the music of Schoenberg and Stravinsky to show how it relates to Adorno's own context as a 'Jew'.²⁰

The corpus of biographical works on Adorno is relatively limited.²¹ There are but a few accounts of his life in America.²² Adorno's reflections on American society, however, are often revealing. I will focus on personal documents of Adorno and his colleagues which relate to his experiences before, during and after the Holocaust.

²⁰ Indeed, racial terminology presents a problem in such a study. 'German' is used here to mean those who were considered by the state to be 'pure' Germans; 'Jew' is used here to mean those who were considered by 'pure' Germans to be Jews. Adorno and Schoenberg were both born in Germany but were considered to be Jews.

²¹ The following list include biographical sources as well as works with biographical notes on Adorno: Martin Jay, *Adorno*, and "Adorno in America," *New German Critique*, 31 (1984), 157-182; Leo Lowenthal, "Theodor W. Adorno: An Intellectual Memoir," *Humanities and Social Sciences* 2 (1979), 387-399, and "Recollections of Theodor W. Adorno," *Telos*, 61 (1984), 158-165; Max Paddison, *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Joan Nordquist, *Theodor Adorno* (Santa Cruz: Reference and Research Services, 1988); Carlo Pettazzi, "Kommentierte Bibliographie zu Th. W. Adorno," *Theodor W. Adorno*, ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: Edition Text+Kritik, 1977), p. 176-191; F. E. Sparshott, "Adorno."

²² T. W. Adorno, "Scientific Experiences of a European Scholar in America," in *The Intellectual Migration: Europe and America, 1930-1960*, ed. Donald Fleming (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969); Harvey Gross, "Adorno in Los Angeles: The Intellectual in Emigration," *Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2 (1979), 339-351; Peter Hohendahl, "The Displaced Intellectual? Adorno's American Years Revisited," *New German Critique*, 56 (1992), 76-100; David E. Morrison, "Kultur and Culture: The Case of Theodor W. Adorno and Paul F. Lazarsfeld," *Social Research*, 45 (1978), 331-344.

II

In the process of his discussion on kitsch and avant-garde art, Adorno adopts, resists and abrogates the ideas of many seminal thinkers including Jung and Le Bon. Although the temptation is to delve into their works, in the interest of cogency, it will be necessary to limit my discussions only to those philosophical, psychological, sociological and musicological issues that are relevant.

My own assumptions and beliefs also limit this study:

1. We are an historical species, contextually conditioned and affected. The possibility of an 'objective' language is a socially conditioned belief.

2. Our own intellectual, philosophical, and artistic enterprises reflect aspects of our given socio-cultural, historical and personal contexts.

3. Through a pluralistic, dialectical reading of a particular topic or issue, one is able to gain more insights than were one to approach the topic from a 'particular' perspective. What one chooses to emphasise or to exclude renders a topic subjective.

4. Technology progresses towards a domination of nature. In other words, we evolve in our understanding of nature as time progresses. Our understanding of the mysteries of internal and external nature leads, in a sense, to a mastery of nature. Capitalist monopolies customarily use such knowledge to manipulate the masses for economic gain.

5. Scientific and humanistic enterprises are not synchronous. Whereas scientific knowledge 'progresses', humanistic enterprises occur sporadically throughout the history of modern Western civilisation.

6. Review of Literature

From a preliminary review of literature, it became apparent that no in-depth study has been done on Adorno's *Philosophy of Modern Music* that has addressed crucial contextual, theoretical, and musical concerns. Anne G. Mitchell's thesis, *Theodor Adorno's Philosophy of Modern Music: Evaluation and Commentary*²³ relies extensively on her and Wesley Blomster's translation of the text.²⁴ The *Philosophy of Modern Music* is perhaps the single most criticised translation of any of Adorno's writings, musicological or otherwise. Its failure lies in its over-interpretation and levelling down of Adorno's ideas and its disregard for the rhetorical elegance hidden in Adorno's seemingly chaotic text.²⁵

In Mitchell and Blomster's defence, however, I have found that the book's fragmented style, like abstract art itself, forces readers to 'complete' it. Mitchell and Blomster's errors stem from the tendency to underestimate its rich symbolic and metaphorical dimensions.

Mitchell's reductionist approach transcends her thesis. In her assessment of the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, she takes his intentionally exaggerated conceptions of Stravinsky and Schoenberg literally, without recognising the intentionality of Adorno's design. As a result, she fails to connect Adorno's two protagonists to the more significant critique of kitsch and avant-garde art, and twentieth-century mass culture.

In his monograph, *Art and Enlightenment: Aesthetic Theory after Adorno*,²⁶ David Roberts highlights Adorno's use of parody in the

²³ (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Colorado, 1973).

²⁴ *Philosophy of Modern Music* (London: Salisbury Press, 1973).

²⁵ Rose writes, "This translation is atrocious," p. 195. Mitchell and Blomster interpret, for example, the following phrase: "... die Träne quillt, die Erde hat mich wieder," as "Tears dim my eyes, earth's child I am again," p. 129. A closer translation is "Tears well-up, the earth has me again." *Philosophie der neuen Musik* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1994), p. 117.

²⁶ (London Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1991).

Philosophy of Modern Music. While this focus implicitly acknowledges the broader applications of Adorno's rhetorical and socio-cultural theories, it also serves as a means to side-step a discussion on music. Roberts uses Adorno's theories to discuss social and literary issues without first unpacking Adorno's cryptical aesthetic ideas on music.

7. Methodology

I use the methodologies of historical, causal-comparative and descriptive research.²⁷ First, I highlight the primary constellations in Adorno's text, then consider whether his experiences as a German Jew affected his work. I also include antinomies when they occur - to avoid the following tendency identified by Jameson:

In historiography, the decision about continuity or discontinuity is taken up in advance, as a kind of absolute presupposition . . . which then determines your subsequent reading and interpretation of the materials.²⁸

Chapter Two concentrates on Adorno's literary style. It outlines the rhetorical techniques and his literary influences that are manifest in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*.

²⁷ *Historical Research*: 'Events that occurred in the relatively distant past and seeks, by gathering and analysing past and current descriptions of that event, to present a picture of what happened; *Causal-Comparative Research*: The researcher looks at a present characteristic, views it as the result of past causal factors, and tries by examining past factors to discover the causes, critical relationships, and meaning in the characteristics; *Descriptive Research*: The researcher makes a systematic description and analysis of the 'facts' and characteristics of a given event of interest'. See in J.B. Francis' *The Proposal Cookbook* (Naples, FL: Action Research Associates, 1978), pp. 20-21.

²⁸ *Late Marxism*, p. 5.

Chapter Three introduces the socio-psychological and aesthetic theories of Benjamin, Freud, Hegel, Jung, Le Bon, Lukacs, Nietzsche, that Adorno uses to discuss twentieth century culture.

Chapters Four and Five examine Adorno's literal, symbolic and metaphorical critique of Stravinsky and Schoenberg respectively.

Chapter Six highlights Adorno's prophetic critique of post-W.W.II democratic culture and society.

Chapter Seven concludes the study. Throughout my discussion, I show how the theme of humanity and the loss of humanity in (late) capitalist society is at the core of Adorno's discussions. Without 'the loss of humanity' in Germany and in democratic Western society before and during the Second World-War, there never would have been the Holocaust.

CHAPTER TWO

ADORNO'S DISCURSIVE STYLE

Introduction

The *Philosophy of Modern Music* is a labyrinth. Like Kandinsky's painting, *Dominant Curve* (1936), the book's fragmentary nature compels the reader to make sense of its meaning. This 'completion' of the object mirrors aspects the subject's own tendencies. Sometimes, the impression arrived at by the subject is antithetical to the intentions of the creator of the object.

What makes the *Philosophy of Modern Music* most difficult to comprehend is its one-sided portrayal of Stravinsky and Schoenberg. Adorno even uses the ideas of Freud, Lukacs, Benjamin, Hegel, Jung, Nietzsche, and Le Bon to justify his claims. Read literally, Adorno's ideas on Stravinsky and Schoenberg seem preposterous; read methodologically, Adorno's ideas are profoundly illuminating.

Adorno anticipated the difficulty the reader would have in interpreting the book. It is perhaps for this reason that he begins the section, "Schoenberg and Progress" with the following quote from Hegel:

Pure insight is in the first instance without content and rather the pure disappearance of content; but through the negative movement against that which is negative to it, pure insight will out-realise itself and give itself a content.²⁹

²⁹ Die reine Einsicht aber ist zunächst ohne Inhalt und vielmehr reines Verschwinden desselben; durch die negative Bewegung gegen das ihr Negative aber wird sie sich realisieren und einen Inhalt geben, p. 36.

The above intends to provide the reader with necessary clues on how to approach the text.

A key to understanding Adorno's approach rests in the first and second phrases: "Pure insight, however, is in the first instance without any content." Adorno implies that Stravinsky and Schoenberg are, ultimately, a means to discuss larger socio-cultural issues. His discussion on these composers is fragmented, and "that which is negative to it," i.e., that which is excluded, will complete the text. In other words, the reader's rational and empirical tendencies and their own situatedness help to 'complete' the text.

The socio-cultural, and historical issues to which Adorno alludes or were prevalent during the 1940s are intended to create a contextual, intellectual and emotional mine-field. His constellations and force-fields are intended to spark the reader's imagination into an 'unreified' understanding of German fascism and its parallels to post-W.W.II Western democracies.

While Adorno's expectations of the reader were demanding even in his time, today, history itself has contributed to the cryptical nature of his text. Almost fifty years have passed since the *Philosophy of Modern Music* was first published. No longer is the ominous sense of the Holocaust as prevalent in the collective psyche as it was during the time in which the book was written.

Furthermore, no longer are artists such as Strauss, Furtwängler, Orff, Von Karajan or Malipiero known as artists who were in some way linked to Hitlerian fascism as they would have been especially among Jewish musicologists during and after World-War Two.

To interpret Adorno's text, one must recreate certain aspects of Adorno's personal, socio-cultural and historical context to see to what issues he refers. One must judge Adorno's 'pure insights' from our given context to see if they remain relevant to us. First, however, one must try to understand what Adorno is saying.

This chapter provides the reader with a means of deciphering Adorno's text; it outlines my approach in reading the *Philosophy of Modern Music*. In another sense, it explains the manner in which Adorno writes about music. Chapter Two also highlights Adorno's use of allusions, metaphors, force-fields, exaggeration and other devices, and provides both personal and intellectual reasons why he avoids rational and empirical language.

Indeed, Adorno's own writing style seems to define itself from the critique of many individuals' styles. Part One discusses his critique of the styles of Hegel and Lukacs. It also introduces the rhetorical ideas of Benjamin, Nietzsche and Kraus and shows how the Frankfurt scholar implements them in his own writing. Part Two suggests that the philosopher's avoidance of rational and positivist language may also have been influenced by his experiences as a German Jew. Part Three is an analysis of a passage of the *Philosophy of Modern Music*. Throughout this chapter I show that his literary style is, in some respects, an attempt to recapture the experiential power of language in an age of 'second-nature' discourse. As Lowenthal writes:

His sense of responsibility for language, his hostility [is directed towards the] all-embracing emergence of a one-dimensional, nonconnotative, unambiguous language of efficiency and predigested derivative thought that leaves no room for the unique

and idio-syncratic, for productive imagination and the dissenting voice . . .³⁰

Part One

ADORNO AND THE RHETORICAL STYLES OF HEGEL AND LUKACS

I

Hegel on pure observation—Adorno's critique of pure observation—Lukacs and communicative Language—Adorno's critique of communicative language

Adorno argues that Hegel was only partially correct when he states:

. . . we do not require to bring standards with us, and to apply our ideas and thoughts in the examination; and just by leaving these aside we reach a point where we can look at the subject as it actually is in itself and for itself.³¹

Hegel thought that if one were to describe a given artistic object without 'biases' one could capture the object's historical truth.

³⁰ *Critical Theory and Frankfurt Theorists* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1986), p. 60.

³¹ . . . wir nicht nötig haben, Maßstäbe mitzubringen und unsere Einfälle und Gedanken bei der Untersuchung zu applizieren; dadurch, daß wir diese weglassen, erreichen wir es, die Sache, wie sie an und für sich selbst ist, zu betrachten, p. 33. Please note: unless indicated, all German quotations are taken from the *Philosophie der neuen Musik* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1994).

Hegel aimed to achieve an objective language. Within its given historical context, objective language, he argued, affords individuals a medium for conveying 'truth'.

While Adorno agrees with Hegel that art criticism must emulate the object of its concern, Adorno opposes Hegel's idea of 'pure observation' on several grounds. The Frankfurt scholar argues that to discuss art without acknowledging its mythical qualities is to treat pure observation as the essence of an object. 'Pure observation' is as dogmatic as is logical positivist criticism. And within late capitalist society, to perpetuate the belief that pure observation is 'truth' is to mutate experience and cognition.

Hegel's 'pure observation' concept is related to first-principle thinking, and in an age in which administered society has all but extinguished subjectivity, passion, and irrationality through sloganeering, authoritative and communicative language, conscientious criticism cannot afford to perpetuate a first-principle criticism of the world. To discuss the object rationally without its mythical qualities is to suppress 'otherness' in the same manner that conventional criticism currently administers to us its censored, manipulative, selective view of reality - through direct, clear discourse. As Adorno states: "This is the limit of the immanent process, for [today] it is disallowed from supporting itself dogmatically by means of positive transcendence - as little as could Hegel in his time."³²

Adorno's critique of Hegel's language is largely the result of the use of rational language today. Rational philosophical models in institutions have contributed to the social totality by treating unique

³² Das ist die Grenze des immanenten Verfahrens, während es doch so wenig wie einst das Hegelsche auf positive Transzendenz dogmatisch sich stützen darf, p. 35.

objects, humans, for example, as collective objects. Rational cognitive structures ignore crucial aspects of what makes us human: subjectivity, irrationality, and passion. Because rationalism and its opposite logical positivism are the primary modes of dealing with and perceiving internal and external nature, individuals tend to suppress crucial aspects of their individuality.

Adorno argues that cognitive systems must allow for both chaos and order: "Perspectives must be fashioned that displace the world, reveal it to be, with all its rifts and crevices as indigent and distorted as it will appear one day in the messianic light."³³ Modern culture and society are rational and irrational. Rational philosophical discourse cannot adequately describe humanistic 'truth':

The text which philosophy has to read is incomplete, contradictory, and fragmentary . . . Authentic philosophic interpretation does not meet up with a fixed meaning which already lies behind the question [closed philosophical systems], but lights it up suddenly and momentarily, and consumes it at the same time . . .³⁴

Hence, the Frankfurt scholar argues that criticism, like music, cannot be judged except within its given social context. Today, rational criticism is like economically rationalised music, it reproduces internal and external dissociation and contributes to autocratic behaviour. Commodified art and rational discourse anaesthetise socio-cultural phenomena. Today, we suffer from the dilemma of "topological thinking which knows the place

³³ *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Seabury, 1976), p. 247.

³⁴ "The Actuality of Philosophy," *Telos*, 31 (1977), 126; 133.

of every phenomenon but the essence of none."³⁵ In his aversion to the domination of rational, 'historically objective' discourse, Adorno opposes not only Hegel, but also Lukacs.

Lukacs believed that Adorno's rhetoric was written in a manner that only intellectuals could appreciate. Adorno's labyrinthine writing caused Lukacs to remark that the young "Adorno had taken up residence in the grand Hotel Abyss."³⁶ As a radical Leftist during the Weimar Era, Lukacs believed that abstract rhetoric failed to reach the proletariat and therefore wasn't fit for radical revolutionary purposes:

If literature is indeed a special mode of narrowing objective reality, then it is of utmost importance that it comprehends this reality as it is actually constituted and that it not limit itself to a rendering of that which immediately appears . . .³⁷

As Stephen Bronner states: "Lukacs' distrust of irrationalism, the subjectivist revolt, and mysticism of any sort is basic to his later thought in its philosophical as well as in its aesthetic components."³⁸

Throughout the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno defends the abstract nature of his discourse. At a latent level, he proposes that in capitalistic society, clear language is a tool of authoritative forces to control the masses, and, any revolution furthered through dictating Marxist ideology to the masses goes against the fundamental precept of Marxism - to empower the proletariat. Adorno believes that empowering

³⁵ *Prisms: Cultural Criticism and Society*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (London: Spearman, 1967), p. 31.

³⁶ Cited in Jay's *Adorno*, p. 18.

³⁷ Cited in Bronner's "Expressionism and Marxism: Towards an Aesthetic of Emancipation," in *Passion and Rebellion*, eds. Stephen Eric Bronner and Douglas Kellner (London: Croom Helm, 1983), p. 447.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 447.

the proletariat starts from their reception of the text. The manner in which authors/artists present their ideas should not instruct the proletariat on how to behave. Adorno's *Philosophy of Modern Music*'s own fragmented style attempts to engage and enlighten the reader without reifying their world-view.

The philosopher's strong distrust of communicative language encountered throughout the *Philosophy of Modern Music* implicitly addresses diatribes levelled against him by Lukacs. This is evident when Adorno states, for example, that lonely discourse reveals more about society than does communicative discourse, or when he justifies his rhetorical style through the metaphor of Schoenberg's music:

"The artwork," the expressionistic Schoenberg wrote forty years ago, "is a labyrinth, at every point of which the one who understands knows the entrance and the exit, without a red thread leading him. The more finely meshed and woven the veins, the more certainly will he soar above every path towards his goal. Wrong paths, if there were such in a work of art, would set him back on his right course, and every digressing turn of the road would still place him in relationship to the direction of the essential content."³⁹

Whereas the Frankfurt scholar's language treats the world as a natural, 'incomplete' reality, rational, communicative language treats the world as

³⁹ "Das Kunstwerk" schrieb vor vierzig Jahren der expressionistische Schönberg, "ist ein Labyrinth, an dessen jedem Punkte der Kundige Ein- und Ausgang weiß, ohne daß ihn ein roter Faden leitet. Je engmaschiger und verschlungener die Adern, desto sicherer schwebt er über jeden Weg zum Ziel. Irrwege, gäbe es solche im Kunstwerk, sie wiesen ihn richtig, und jede abschweifendste Wegwendung setzt ihn in Beziehung zur Richtung des Wesensinhaltes, p. 110.

if it were second nature, or a finished reality. Communicative language leaves little room for the irrational, the mythical, and the subjective. It isolates shared traits among unique 'subjects' and treats them only as 'objects' that resemble each other. Adorno states this indirectly when he compares photographic reproduction to Picasso's abstract art:

This rationality manipulates given objects and leaves them resigned in their superficial appearance without intervening in the object except intermittently. Out of the reflexes which photography powerlessly let falls upon the objects depicted, Picasso constructs his own reflexes which challenge the objects. . . . It is no different with twelve-tone compositions. In their labyrinths may hibernate those that escape from the impending ice-age.⁴⁰

Adorno's attack on the rhetorical ideas of Lukacs and Hegel stems from his strong distrust of direct, rational 'objective' communication in late capitalist society.⁴¹ In the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, the author often presents the opposing view, the 'negative', without mediation. He sometimes undermines reason and logic by using fluid, *a priori* premises that lead to antinomical conclusions. This technique parallels several thinkers' writings, but in particular, Benjamin and Nietzsche. First I

⁴⁰ Diese (Rationalität) manipuliert vorgegebene . . . Gegenstände und beläßt sie resigniert in ihrer Äußerlichkeit, ohne in den Gegenstand selber anders als bloß intermittierend einzugreifen. Aus den Reflexen jedoch, welche die Photographie machtlos auf die abgebildeten Objekte fallen läßt, konstruiert Picasso die seinen, die jene herausfordern. Nicht anders steht es mit den Zwölftonkompositionen. In ihrem Labyrinth mag überwintern, was der hereinbrechenden Eiszeit entrinnt, pp. 109-110.

⁴¹ As Donald Kuspit writes in "Critical Notes on Adorno's Sociology of Music and Art," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 33 (1975), "Reason, for Adorno, has become technologized, and often inhuman," 324.

briefly introduce elements of Nietzsche's style and then show how they parallel Adorno's style in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*.

II

THE INFLUENCE OF NIETZSCHE, BENJAMIN AND KRAUS ON ADORNO

Irony in Nietzsche and Adorno—Benjamin's constellations and his mythical style Adorno's mimesis—Expressive syntax in Kraus and Adorno—Freud on psychoanalysis and force-fields—Adorno as patient—Adorno as therapist

Walter Kaufmann remarks,

Nietzsche had an almost pathological obsession for one particular kind of ambiguity, which to be sure, is not irremediable: he loved words and phrases that mean one thing out of context and almost the opposite in the context he gives them. He loved language as poets do and relished these 'revaluations'. All of them involve a double meaning, one exoteric and one esoteric, one - to put it crudely - wrong, and the other right. The former is bound to lead astray hasty readers, browsers, and that rapidly growing curse of our time - the non-readers who do not realise that galloping consumption is a disease.⁴²

⁴² In Kaufmann's Introduction to Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, 4th imp., trans. R. J. Hollingdale and Walter Kaufmann (London: Vintage, 1989), p. 6.

Underlying Nietzsche's style was a rebellion against conventional language. He relied on stark, passionate discourse, brazen declamations, and avoided positing arguments in logical sequences. He undermined his most arrogant assertions. As Nietzsche (ca. 1880s) writes:

My writings are difficult. . . . To understand the most *abbreviated* language ever spoken by a philosopher - and also the one poorest in formulas, most alive, most artistic - one must follow the opposite procedure of that generally required by philosophical literature . . . one must be able to see a problem in its proper place - that is, in the context of the other problems that *belong with it*; and for this one must have at one's finger tips the topography of various nooks and the difficult areas of whole sciences and above all of philosophy.⁴³

In *Ecce Homo*, for example, Nietzsche calls both Martin Luther and Wagner, 'swine'. His intention is not only to shock the reader into an [albeit hostile] engagement with the text, but to reveal the ironic position of his own view of reality to that of the collective. Nietzsche believed that the anti-semitic Luther was morally corrupt, and that Wagner was weak. Wagner could not, for example, resist depicting the dream fantasies of the German people for the sake of fame.

Despite the severity of his many claims, Nietzsche would often undermine them elsewhere. With regard to his championing of the 'Over-man' as in the often quoted phrase, 'the strong stand alone, the weak congregate', Nietzsche would later admit (ca. 1889): "The irony of

⁴³ *On the Genealogy of Moral and Ecce Homo*, 4th imp., trans. R. J. Hollingdale and Walter Kaufmann (London: Vintage, 1989), p. 340.

my life is that I praise the strong, sympathise with the weak, and bear an unquenchable love for the utterly helpless."⁴⁴ As Lowenthal, Rose, and others acknowledge, Nietzsche's use of irony influences Adorno.

Nietzsche's use of words that change according to context also influences Adorno. As he states in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*: "Nietzsche took a consistently 'positive' position on aesthetic conventions, and his *ultima ratio* is the ironic play with forms whose substantiality has diminished."⁴⁵ Like Nietzsche, Adorno transforms the meanings of words and concepts by placing them in different contexts.

Adorno portrays, for example, 'the domination of nature' (*Naturbeherrschung*) as being both socially disastrous and necessary: "Destiny is domination brought to its pure abstraction, and the degree of destruction is equal to the domination, fate, the disaster."⁴⁶

Whereas in the latter the 'domination of nature' leads to disaster, Schoenberg's domination of *musical* nature leads to enlightenment. Dodecaphony is the rational means through which the composer rebels against the culture industry's domination of musical nature; his music, not compromised by economic considerations, escapes the suffocation of pseudo-natural music-making. At its most effective, his music returns the listener to the realm of the 'natural'.

By dominating conventional musical praxis through twelve-tone technique, Schoenberg's music severs ties with the oppressive legacy of bourgeois art music. Adorno also contends that in the past, nature dominated humans, i.e.; we believed that music was a phenomenon

⁴⁴ *My Sister and I* (Los Angeles: AMOK, 1990), p. 59.

⁴⁵ Folgerecht hat Nietzsche zu den ästhetischen Konventionen positiv sich gestellt, und seine *ultima ratio* war das ironische Spiel mit Formen, deren Substantialität geschwunden ist, p. 45.

⁴⁶ Schicksal ist Herrschaft auf ihre reine Abstraktion gebracht, und das Maß an Vernichtung ist dem an Herrschaft gleich, Schicksal das Unheil, p. 68.

which belonged to the intuitive realm of the artist and his world. With the commodification of music through film or advertising, for example, music became a means of causing prescribed emotional reactions. Cultural groups now dominated musical nature and with it human reactions. Schoenberg's music, ironically, returns music back to the forces of nature through a mathematical system - twelve-tone technique. Schoenberg rebels against the very rational constructs of dodecaphony to create a natural, irrational music, or a *Musikalische Naturbeherrschung*. His music's fragmented elements elicit natural humane emotions that are in touch with contemporary experiences in all their horrors.

At times, the Frankfurt scholar juxtaposes his unique views to conventional perceptions. When he states: "all its fortune lies in its perception of misfortune," or "all of its beauty lies in its denial of the illusion of beauty,"⁴⁷ what is considered 'ugly' (Schoenberg's music) is actually 'beautiful' and what is considered 'beautiful' (neoclassical music) is actually 'ugly'. Schoenberg's ugly music is 'progressive' because it rebels against deceptive harmoniousness in music and society.

Adorno also transforms the term inhumanity through context: "The inhumanity of art must outbid the inhumanity of the world for the sake of the humane."⁴⁸ Mechanistic modern society is inhumane; Schoenberg's music, however, is also 'inhumane' because it is not 'beautiful'. It captures anxieties of the modern world. Because it denies itself state-prescribed beauty, it is 'humane'.

A careful reading of the *Philosophy of Modern Music* reveals that other terms such as: beauty (*Schönheit*), progress (*Fortschritt*), rationality

⁴⁷ All ihr Glück hat sie daran, das Unglück zu erkennen . . . all ihre Schönheit, dem Schein des Schönen sich zu versagen, p. 126.

⁴⁸ Die Unmenschlichkeit der Kunst muß die der Welt überbieten um des Menschlichen willen, p. 126.

(*Rationalität*), irrationality (*Irrationalität*), humanity (*Menschlichkeit*) or inhumanity (*Unmenschlichkeit*) change according to context.

From a rhetorical perspective, therefore, Adorno does not reify the meaning of words and concepts. Like Nietzsche, he utilises them in a fluid manner. Words can have positive or negative connotations depending on the context in which they are presented.

Nietzsche's influence is also at the core of Adorno's writing when he plays with traditional argument forms. Like Nietzsche, Adorno opposes the conventional logical praxis of establishing major and minor premises. He deliberately undermines logic by using syllogistic constructs to substantiate shocking, fallacious claims. As does Nietzsche, he 'plays with forms whose substantiality has diminished'.

Adorno states, for example, "The absolute liberation of the particular from the general makes it general because of the polemical and principal relationship of the particular to the general."⁴⁹ Here he suggests the following: Schoenberg's particularistic music resists the rubric of commodified musical culture. His musical self-assertion becomes a general statement because of the fight for individuality in an increasingly collective world.

Interpreted logically, the sentence is tautological - the premise equals the conclusion. In Adorno's writing, however, tautological arguments leave room for ascertaining glimpses of truth. This is because of the shifting meaning of the term 'general' [*Allgemein*]. In the sentence, 'general' means both what is generally accepted as truth, historical truth, and what is the 'actual' historical truth (the *Zeitgeist*) - as in the universal struggle of individuality in an increasingly collective world. Hence, the

⁴⁹ Die absolute Befreiung des Besonderen von der Allgemeinheit macht es durch die polemische und prinzipielle Beziehung auf diese selber zu einem Allgemeinen, p. 53.

absolute liberation of the particular (Schoenberg's music) from the general (conventional music-making) renders the 'particular' (Schoenberg's music), general (the struggle for individuality).

In *Minima Moralia* (1944-1947), Adorno also uses the same technique of positing *a priori* premises to achieve ironic conclusions. He writes, "Hitler eradicated culture; Hitler drove Mr. X into exile, Therefore Mr. X. is culture."⁵⁰ This argument is fallacious on several grounds. Historically, Hitler did not eradicate all culture from the German empire. Many cultured artists, Webern and Otto Dix, for example, were in Germany during the rule of the Nazis. Although oppressed, they continued to create art. Second, not all that sought exile (in America) were 'cultured'. Adorno exaggerates, however, to make a point concerning the fallacious nature of rational constructs. Rational models erroneously treat disparate objects and groups as homogeneous entities. But in the sentence quoted above, Adorno's premises are somewhat true, and his conclusions seem somewhat 'valid'. In a sense, Mr X (Schoenberg, Krenek, Mann, Horkheimer, Lowenthal, Beckmann, *et al*) is culture.

Arguments based on *a priori*, fluid premises lead to new ways of perceiving reality. Tautological arguments also lead to new conclusions largely because the premises Adorno uses are fluid. Hence, rational arguments that use fluid terms and premises can lead to unconventional conclusions. They can suggest new ways of perceiving the world.

Not only does he use shifting premises to justify striking conclusions, as does Nietzsche, Adorno contradicts the very claims he makes: "False is the decline of art in a false order. Its 'truth' is the

⁵⁰ *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, 2nd. ed., trans. E.F.N. Jephcott (London: New Left Books, 1974), p. 57.

negation of the submissiveness to which its central principle, that of consistent correctness, has driven it."⁵¹

In other words, modern society is a 'false order', a place that demands submission and 'consistent' correctness. Avant-garde music is valid or truthful because it *is* considered to be the decline of art by the authorities. It does not submit to a false order, so therefore, it is valid.

In another instance, the critical theorist undermines the brazen assertion above. He claims that although Cage's avant-garde music (ca. 1940s) rebels against the increasing social totality, it also contributes to the death of art: ". . . [aleatory music] preserves its social truth from its antithesis to society - through isolation. But this isolation, on the other hand, lets this truth wither."⁵² Ironically, Cage's aleatory music is hermetic and therefore socially irresponsible. It is often tautological, relating only to the artist and not to the audience.⁵³

Hence, Adorno uses rational constructs to push fluid premises to the point where they undermine rationalism itself. By creating antinomies and contradictions through logic, Adorno implicitly contends that logical praxis is inadequate for assessing reality and the reflexive relations between humans and their orderly/chaotic world.

Throughout the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Schoenberg's subjective, irrational music serves as the catalyst that highlights the ironies between a flawed, positivistic contemporary existence and an ideal existence, between 'false' art and 'true' art. Many of the ambiguities that surround terms and concepts come from the polemical manner in

⁵¹ Falsch ist der Untergang von Kunst in der falschen Ordnung. Ihre Wahrheit ist die Verneinung der Fügbarkeit, in welche ihr zentrales Prinzip, das des bruchlosen Stimmens, sie hineingetrieben hat, p.108.

⁵² Wohl bewahrt sie ihre gesellschaftliche Wahrheit kraft der Antithese zur Gesellschaft, durch Isolierung, aber diese läßt wiederum auch sie selber verdorren, p. 21.

⁵³ See Adorno's discussion on superserialism and aleatory music in "Music and Technique," trans. Wes Blomster, *Telos*, 43 (1980), 79 -92.

which Adorno portrays Schoenberg's music. His ugly music is beautiful, his inhumane music is humane. His primal music is utopian. Such is the nature of Schoenberg's 'negative' music within an emotionally pathological, inhumane, and artificial society.

Whereas Nietzsche's influence is especially noticeable in the Frankfurt scholar's use of irony, Walter Benjamin's influence is evident in Adorno's use of constellations. The constellation is a dialectical model that allows for seemingly disparate ideas to reinforce, coalesce, resist, or oppose each other. To understand Adorno's reformulations of Benjamin's concept, it is first necessary to outline the latter's ideas.

Benjamin contends that language is rooted in a mimetic experience of the natural world. In contemporary criticism, however, conventional communication fails to convey the richness of thoughts. Conventional language with its reified modes of expression, and tendencies toward sterility and facility of effort, hardly captures experience. The manner with which we discuss experiences does not convey 'truth'. Instead, we perpetuate myth. Benjamin argues that until humankind re-enters 'a state of grace' in which words embodied the things they named, memory would have to struggle to rescue the remnants of the original mimesis or that experienced in early childhood.

Benjamin uses the constellation as a discursive model which Martin Jay defines in the following manner: "An astronomical term Adorno borrowed from Benjamin to signify. . . juxtaposed rather than integrated cluster of elements that resist reduction to a common denominator, essential core, or generative first principle."⁵⁴ By discussing an object from a variety of approximations, Benjamin provides a more pluralistic interpretation. His much quoted phrase, 'history is a history of

⁵⁴ *Adorno*, pp. 14-15.

winners', for example, implies its dialectic: there is another history, that of 'losers'. His influence would be evident in the manner in which Adorno uses music as a symbol of culture.⁵⁵

To bridge the gap between signifier and signified (i.e., the mythical) Benjamin insists on allegories, metaphors and allusions. Such devices serve implicitly to acknowledge the inadequacies of conventional language. They remind us of our present inability to achieve a unity between language and nature. Second, such devices recapture mythical aspects of the object. Figurative language brings us closer to the sensuous relation between word and thing. As Benjamin writes:

To prise an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose 'sense of the universal equality of things' has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object by means of reproduction.⁵⁶

Adorno summarises Benjamin's style:

His statements appealed not to revelation but to a type of experience that was distinguished from ordinary experience in failing to respect the restrictions and prohibitions to which a ready-made consciousness normally submits. . . . Benjamin does not derive the relationship to the Absolute from concepts but instead seeks it in bodily contact with the materials.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Susan Buck-Morss' comparison between the thought of Benjamin and Adorno in *The Origin of Negative Dialectics* is most informative, see pp. 24-42.

⁵⁶ "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Art after Modernism*, trans. Harry Zohn and ed. Brian Wallis (London: Chapman, 1988), p. 217.

⁵⁷ *Notes to Literature*, vol.2, trans. Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 221

The influence of Benjamin is clearly evident in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*. It is especially noticeable in the manner in which Adorno relies on poetic formulations. Throughout the book, Adorno insists on bringing the reader closer to the experience of music through evocative language: allusions, metaphors, and rich, auratic terms.

A few years after completing the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno (1956) described his literary style:

The concept of nature to be dissolved is one that, if I translated it into standard philosophical terminology, would come closest to the concept of 'myth'. This concept is also vague and its exact sense cannot be given in preliminary definitions but only in the course of analysis. By it is meant what had been what as fully arranged predetermined being, [myth] underlies history and appears in history; it is substance in history. What is delimited by these expressions is what I mean here by 'nature'.⁵⁸

His subjective language is deliberately rich in adjectives and declamations: "The triumph of subjectivity over the heteronomous tradition, the freedom, allowing every musical moment not to be subsumed, 'comes to stand at an expensive cost'."⁵⁹ Evocative nouns such as triumph (*Triumph*) or freedom (*Freiheit*) characterise Adorno's writing. Words are carefully selected in terms of their experiential qualities. Auratic words enhance Adorno's tactile language.

⁵⁸ "The Idea of Natural History," *Telos*, 60 (Summer 1984), 111.

⁵⁹ *Der Triumph der Subjektivität über die heteronome Tradition, die Freiheit, jeden musikalischen Augenblick subsumtionslos ihn selber sein zu lassen, kommt teuer zu stehen*, p. 101.

Sometimes Adorno juxtaposes seemingly incompatible terms to bring the reader closer to the relation between word and thing. In the phrase, Schoenberg's "inhumane coldness [is superior to Berg's] big-hearted warmth,"⁶⁰ *superior* 'inhumane coldness' more accurately describes the author's view of the music - Schoenberg's cold music is superior because it is a true realisation of our cold, sterile society. The term 'superior coldness' also forces the reader to conceive of a music that is superior because it lacks warmth. Warm classical music fails to crystallise truth concerning our social dilemmas. As Nietzsche's ironic statements challenge our conceptions of the world, so does Adorno's insistence on bridging the gap between signifier and signified, à la Benjamin, force us to examine language and experience anew. 'Superior coldness' challenges our perception that music ought to be 'warm' to be beautiful.

Like Benjamin, Adorno sometimes only alludes to his claims. The importance of knowing one's self and asserting one's humanity in an increasingly inhumane, autocratic world are latent but constant themes throughout the *Philosophy of Modern Music*. When Adorno quotes Goethe, "Tears well-up, the earth has me again,"⁶¹ he does not inform the reader that Goethe's insistence on a return to nature was in part an opposition to the prevailing influence of Newtonianism. Goethe believed that scientific models used to assess human phenomena sterilised experience. They dissociated humans from an experiential connection to the world.⁶²

In the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, another such allusion occurs in the following metaphorical phrase: "The world is the Sphinx, the artist is

⁶⁰ . . . die unmenschliche Kälte der großherzigen Wärme, p. 105.

⁶¹ . . . die Träne quillt, die Erde hat mich wieder . . . , p. 117.

⁶² "Goethe," *Grolliers Encyclopedia*: CD-Rom, 1985.

her blinded Oedipus, and the works of art are of the kind of his wise answer which plunges the Sphinx into the abyss."⁶³

Although complete in itself, the phrase omits to say that in Greek mythology, the Sphinx strangled passers-by who could not guess its riddle. Modern society is the Sphinx and we must guess its riddle, we must understand its aim to make us into a submissive, mechanised consumer, or we too plunge into the abyss. Adorno's intention is to trigger or at least, to allude to the archetype.

Several themes introduced in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* are also found in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*. But the topics these books share are often obscured or understated. In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno dedicates chapters to "The Culture Industry," "Mass Deception," and "Anti-Semitism." In the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, these themes are latent yet constant throughout. In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno blurs the distinctions between Nazi state capitalism and post World-War Two American capitalism. Following Jay (1984), Hohendahl writes, Adorno's:

... analysis of American society, included explicitly or implicitly, an analysis of modern Germany since both the political system of the National Socialists and the organisation of culture in North America were seen as aspects of the same historical dialectic of [capitalistic] reason.⁶⁴

⁶³ Die Welt ist die Sphinx, der Künstler ihr verblendeter Oedipus und die Kunstwerke von der Art seiner weisen Antwort, welche die Sphinx in den Abgrund stürzt, p. 125.

⁶⁴ P. 79.

Although Adorno concentrates on twentieth-century German culture surrounding and including the two World-Wars, in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, his 'theoretical ideas' derived from this examination are meant to configure in later capitalist societies.

Although Adorno levels several diatribes against Stravinsky for his allegedly fascist music, Stravinsky is an archetype used to discuss theories concerning those artists that create regressive kitsch culture in the twentieth century. The critical theorist tells us this at the very beginning of his book:

The principle that Walter Benjamin . . . follows in his treatise on the German tragedy . . . can be used justifiably for a philosophical contemplation of new music, out of the subject itself; for only in extremes does modern music find itself distinguished; only extremes allow for the recognition of truth. Because of this and not in the illusion of grand personalities, will only these two authors be discussed.⁶⁵

Using select artists' works to figuratively discuss aspects of fascist culture is typical of Adorno during this period. In "What National Socialism Has Done to the Arts" (1945), he begins with the following:

In order not to lose ourselves in too vast a field I shall concentrate on the fate of *music* which I had an opportunity to study most

⁶⁵ Das Prinzip, dem Walter Benjamin . . . in seinem Traktat über das deutsche Trauerspiel folgte, kann für eine philosophisch gemeinte Betrachtung der neuen Musik . . . aus dem Gegenstand selber begründet werden. Denn einzig in den Extremen findet das Wesen dieser Musik sich ausgeprägt; sie allein gestatten die Erkenntnis ihres Wahrheitsgehalts. . . . Daher, und nicht in der Illusion der großen Persönlichkeit, werden bloß die zwei Autoren erörtert, p. 13.

closely. I wish to emphasise, however, that music serves here merely as an example of much broader sociological aspects, not as an end in itself.⁶⁶

In the article, he uses Wagner's music to discuss Nazism:

The whole plot of Wagner's *Ring* suggests some kind of a gigantic Nazi frame-up, with Siegfried as an innocent, loveable Teutonic hero who, just by chance, conquers the world and ultimately falls victim to the Jewish conspiracy of the dwarfs and those who trust their counsel.⁶⁷

In the same article, Adorno also uses Richard Strauss' music to discuss the dissociating qualities of Nazi culture.

In the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, the two archetypes, Stravinsky and Schoenberg, represent artists that supported and opposed German fascism respectively (why Adorno chooses Stravinsky and Schoenberg will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five respectively).

The Frankfurt scholar also makes subtle critiques of various scholars. When for example, he presents his views on film and photography, his formulations are intended to question Benjamin's ideas found in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," and in the "Author as Producer." When Adorno declares that Stravinsky's music is sado-masochistic, he uses the Russian/French composer's works as metaphors of fascist German culture. In other words, he uses Freudian psycho-analytical categories to examine Nazi culture through an alleged

⁶⁶ *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol.20, bk.2, eds. Rolf Tiedemann, Gretel Adorno, Susan Buck-Morss and Klaus Schultz (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970-1986), p. 414.

⁶⁷ P. 415.

analysis of Stravinsky's music. When Adorno discusses issues concerning the domination of nature, he reformulates the concept used by Hegel and Lukacs. Throughout the book, Adorno makes subtle references to the rhetorical ideas of various thinkers, the most prominent being Hegel, Lukacs, and Benjamin.⁶⁸

In the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, among the most prevalent stylistic tendencies are to exaggerate music's immanence in society, and to treat music as crystallised essence of a composer's idealised social constructs:

That certain freedom, into which it [Schoenberg's music] undertook to change its anarchistic condition, has changed under the hands of this music into an allegory of the world against which it protests.⁶⁹

Stravinsky's neotraditional works instil and reinforce social and racial ideologies in his audiences. His music is socially exclusive - for insiders. It is for the conservative collective. Schoenberg's 'inclusive', atonal and serial works cause catharsis and suggest social and racial acceptance. His fragmented music is also individualistic and it provokes the same. When Adorno discusses the music of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, his ideas

⁶⁸ In works that surround the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno uses a similar technique. In *Minima Moralia*, for example, he switches Nietzsche's claim "live life" to "Life Lives Not," and Hegel's claim, "the whole is true" to "The Whole is False." They become title headings for two of his essays. In the inversion of Hegel's claim, Adorno argues that the 'whole' in modern society fails to capture 'otherness'; In the inversion of Nietzsche's claim, Adorno argues that to 'live life' in modern society is difficult because of the persuasive power administrations to undermine the individual's choices. See Rose's *The Melancholy Science*, pp. 5-22; See also Leon Bailey's "Theodor W. Adorno: Reflections from Damaged Life," *Issues in Radical Therapy*, 9 (1986), 9-49.

⁶⁹ Die bestimmte Freiheit, in welche sie ihren anarchischen Stand umzudenken unternahm, hat sich ihr unter den Händen ins Gleichnis der Welt verkehrt, gegen die sie sich auflehnt, p. 43.

oscillate uneasily between literalism, symbolism and theory. Following in Benjamin's legacy, when Adorno discusses the impact of the music of Schoenberg and Stravinsky in Germany within the first half of the twentieth century, his discussion implicitly includes other artists such as Picasso and Kafka, and Strauss and Von Karajan, those that opposed, or supported fascism.

Following Benjamin and paralleling other writers (including Karl Kraus and Max Weber), Adorno's literary style implicitly demonstrates that to represent the mimetic relationship between music and criticism, critical discussion must adopt something of the object in its own conduct. In the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, his text emulates and mirrors the experiences of the music he discusses. He uses declarative language to describe Stravinsky's fascist music: "Wherever the subjective is encountered, it appears as depraved, it is sentimentally kitschy [*sentimental verkitscht*] or made idiotic."⁷⁰ It is immediate, like sloganeering itself. In contrast, his discussion of Schoenberg's music is more experimental. It is composed of condensed linguistic formulations. Adorno supports the lucidity and 'unconsciousness' of Schoenberg's atonal and dodecaphonic music with an equally searching style. Concerning Schoenberg's twelve-tone music, Adorno writes:

The actual revolutionary moment for him is in the change in function of musical expression. There are no longer simulated passions, but rather genuine incarnate movements of the

⁷⁰ Wo Subjektives begegnet, begegnet es als depraviert; als sentimental verkitscht oder vertrottelt, p. 135.

unconscious, shocks, traumas registered without disguise through the medium of music.⁷¹

Allusions, metaphors, rich terms, ironic inversions, an expressive syntax and playing with logical forms configure in Adorno's writing style as constellations. Fragments that oppose, resist or converge create force-fields. And Benjamin's constellation model allows Adorno to present a variety of fluid perspectives on the given topic. Adorno can be hypersubtle and suggest historical connections (as in the allusion to the Goethe - Newton polemic). He can offer a 'tactile' perspective of a given phenomenon. He can create highly suggestive texts that allow the reader to decipher and criticise both Adorno's claims and those of other writers. Ultimately, Adorno tries to bridge the gap between signifier and signified by breaking down 'reified', conventional, rational communication.

Like Benjamin, Adorno's cryptic text attempts to capture the social character of the music he discusses. Extreme subjectivity, hyper-realised and understated descriptions become part of his devices. Through a poetic language, Adorno avoids the myth of the possibility of a pure (scientific) language. By expunging language's natural qualities, Adorno claims as does Benjamin, Nietzsche, Kraus and Goethe that 'pure' scientific language is, in part, a myth - a deceiving, collective historical endeavour that contributes to the sterilisation of experience and the increasing inhumanity of society.

Adorno heightens the expressiveness of his writing through what Jameson refers to as an expressive syntax. Jameson remarks that it is in

⁷¹ Das eigentlich umstürzende Moment an ihm ist der Funktionswechsel des musikalischen Ausdrucks. Es sind nicht Leidenschaften mehr fingiert, sondern im Medium der Musik unverstellt leibhafte Regungen des Unbewußten, Schocks, Traumata registriert, p. 44.

Karl Kraus' writing that Adorno finds the paradigm of breaking down the conventions of syntax to capture experience in a more heightened manner.⁷² Run-on sentences used to capture a particular subjective experience are elegantly conveyed in Karl Kraus' writing. In his essay, "In these Great Times," for example, Kraus discusses the horrors of World War One (1914):

In these great times which I knew when they were this small; which will become small again, provided they have time left for it; and which, because in the realm of organic growth no such transformation is possible, we had better call fat times and, truly, hard times as well; in these times in which things are happening that could not be imagined and in which what can no longer be imagined must happen, for if one could imagine it, it would not happen; in these serious times which have died laughing at the thought that they might become serious. . . .⁷³

Kraus breaks down conventional syntax to make his writing more effective. In the same essay, he also uses numbing ironies: "Who has something to say, come forward and be silent!"⁷⁴ Emotion surfaces through the transforming of syntax, and acidic ironic declamations.

⁷² See Jameson's discussion on Karl Kraus' influence on Adorno in *Late Marxism*, pp. 63-72.

⁷³ In dieser großen Zeit, die ich noch gekannt habe, wie sie so klein war; die wieder klein werden wird, wenn ihr dazu noch Zeit bleibt; und die wir, weil im Bereich organischen Wachstums derlei Verwandlung nicht möglich ist, lieber als eine dicke Zeit und wahrlich auch schwere Zeit ansprechen wollen; in dieser Zeit, in der eben das geschieht, was man sich nicht vorstellen konnte, und in der geschehen muß, was man sich nicht mehr vorstellen kann, und könnte man es, es geschähe nicht -; in dieser ernsten Zeit, die sich zu Tode gelacht hat vor der Möglichkeit, daß sie ernst werden könnte . . . In *These Great Times*, trans. Harry Zohn (Carcanet: Manchester, 1984), p. 70 (translation modified).

⁷⁴ Wer etwas zu sagen hat, trete vor und schweige! p. 76.

Lowenthal remarks that Adorno deeply admired and was influenced by Kraus' rhetorical style.⁷⁵

Using Kraus' writing as a model, Adorno finds a way in which the mechanics of a sentence convey meaning. Like Kraus, Adorno uses anaphora, where the use of key words are repeated in succeeding sentences. This technique allows Adorno to offer a heightened degree of concentration on a specific issue as he systematically examines it:

In that the aesthetic object is to be designated as pure here-and-now, it overlaps the pure here-and-now by dint of this negative designation - the denial of all that overlaps that which underlies its law.⁷⁶

The reader is led by the transformation of key terms such as here-and-now (*Bestimmt*) and designate (*Diesda*). The terms themselves gain meaning as literary context changes their meaning. The issue, the 'aesthetic object' is progressively transformed and connected to the larger, increasingly non-reducible whole.

By discarding the convention that language must move progressively from one idea to the next, or the (Cartesian) recipe that language should be rational, clear, simple, logical, Adorno opens up fissures and lacunae. Writing becomes more than a creative enterprise. As in Karl Kraus' writing, it becomes a means to convey rich experiences, not to reduce, rationalise or anaesthetise *Affekt*. Adorno discards

⁷⁵ *Intellectual Memoir*, pp. 287-299.

⁷⁶ Indem das ästhetische Objekt als reines Diesda bestimmt werden soll, geht es gerade vermöge dieser negativen Bestimmung, der Absage an alles Übergreifende, der es als seinem Gesetz unterliegt, über das reine Diesda hinaus, p. 53.

syntactical conventions to capture an impression of the object in its greatest vibrancy.

But Kraus' influence also manifests itself in what Gillian Rose calls 'Adorno's densely woven carpet style'. Throughout the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, he discusses certain issues intermittently, each time under a different context. Like coloured threads in a carpet, issues such as the domination of nature or the inherent sado-masochistic dynamics of capitalist societies disappear and reappear under different contexts.

At one point, for example, the Frankfurt scholar aligns the domination of nature to fate: "But the domination of nature and fate are not to be separated. The term, fate, might well be modelled after the experience of domination."⁷⁷ In another instance he treats the domination of nature as potentially dangerous to human freedom:

But it is the suppressing moment of the domination of nature which suddenly turns against subjective autonomy and freedom itself, in whose name this domination of nature was carried out.⁷⁸

Later in the book, Adorno treats Schoenberg's music as a domination of traditional musical nature: "He must also . . . perceive in this self-created language those traits of the external and the mechanical which the musical domination of nature is necessarily terminated."⁷⁹ By using the concept in different contexts, Adorno redefines its meaning and

⁷⁷ Naturbeherrschung aber und Schicksal sind nicht zu trennen. Dessen Begriff mag nach der Erfahrung der Herrschaft modelliert sein . . . , p. 68.

⁷⁸ Es ist aber das unterdrückende Moment der Naturbeherrschung, das umschlagend gegen die subjektive Autonomie und Freiheit selber sich wendet, in deren Namen die Naturbeherrschung vollzogen ward, pp. 66-67.

⁷⁹ Er muß auch . . . in der selbst geschaffenen Sprache jener Züge des Äußerlichen und Mechanischen gewahr werden, in denen die musikalische Naturbeherrschung notwendig terminiert, p. 101.

applications. Related themes, issues, words or concepts emerge and subside with seeming randomness. Isolated, these units relate to each previous and subsequent references, as they relate to their immediate contexts.

Judged hastily, Adorno's writing appears like a spiteful diatribe from an elitist intellectual. Judged carefully, even Adorno's seemingly affected style serves an important psychological function. It deliberately records his 'abreaction' to the pathologies of capitalist society. Indeed, Adorno's writing style is influenced by Freud.

Freud's psychoanalytic technique impacts strongly on the way in which Adorno writes. During psychoanalysis Freud would ask his patients questions that would allow them to realise the source of their own pathologies. By having them 'talk-out' their concerns, Freud would observe the causes for their anxieties in seemingly unrelated evidence. Obscured pathologies would surface in dreams, slips-of-the-tongue and so on, which like constellations, displayed aversions and attractions to particular historical events of the patient's past. Freud would then ask questions that helped patients to confront the causes of their anxieties, that helped them to discover solutions.

In the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno attempts to awaken the reader through shocking exaggerations. As he states in *Minima Moralia*, "... in psychoanalysis nothing is true except the exaggerations."⁸⁰ The *Philosophy of Modern Music* is also a carefully designed transcript of Adorno's abreaction to pathological society. He presents a rich fabric of metaphors, allusions, historical references, attractions and aversions, all written in a highly subjective manner. To understand the text, the reader

⁸⁰ *Minima Moralia*, p. 49.

must assume the role of the psychoanalyst and uncover why Adorno states what he does. In this way, the reader asserts himself onto the text.

In one sentence, for example, Adorno uses the term 'decadence' in a seemingly understated, pedestrian way: "It is not that [modern music's] decadent, individualistic, and asocial character endangers music as the reactionaries claim. It [music] is actually too little threatened by these factors [decadence, individualism and asocial characteristics]." ⁸¹ The term 'decadence' is, however, precise and laden with socio-cultural and historical meaning. Adorno's employment of 'decadent' is to give the reader a clue to his larger concern - connected to his Jewish past and to what the Nazis eradicated during their rule.

Initially, decadence was a term associated predominantly with turn-of-the-century symbolist poets and novelists such as Rimbaud and Flaubert who termed themselves 'the decadents'. According to Rimbaud, "the poet makes himself a seer by a long, intensive, and reasoned disordering of the senses."⁸²

In Germany, decadence was a revolutionary artistic tendency that was associated predominantly with the Jews. It prevailed from the 1880's to the mid-1930s. It opposed the official military culture of Wilhelm and later, Hitler. Throughout its history, decadent art carried strong political messages of freedom of expression, and the championing of individuality over community. In the famous 'Entartete Kunst' exhibition of 1936, Hitler's *Kulturbüro* featured the decadent works of Schoenberg and the writings of Adorno as examples of cancerous aberrations in the body of Germany that had to be destroyed.

⁸¹ Nicht, daß sie dekadent, individualistisch und asozial wäre, wie die Reaktion ihr vorwirft, gefährdet sie. Sie ist es nur zu wenig, p. 108.

⁸² As cited in Malcolm Bradbury's "Decadence," in the *Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, eds. Alan Bullock, R.B. Woodings, and John Cumming (London: Collins, 1989), p. 204.

The Frankfurt scholar hopes that readers engage their intellectual and creative faculties in figuring out his text. He hopes that the reader identifies his causes for anxiety. Most importantly, he hopes that the reader comes to share his concerns, concerns such as: the increasing extinction of intellectual, social and cultural creativity in modern society; the power of authoritative bodies to control the perceptions, ideas and beliefs of society through psycho-technology; the power of culture industries to perpetuate a fear of social, intellectual, cultural, and racial 'otherness'; the failure of conventional language to adequately discuss social phenomena. If one were to reduce these themes even further, they would encircle the scholar's profound sadness at the loss of humanity in twentieth-century capitalist society.

While his text might appear to be highly individualistic, Adorno's abreaction is, ironically, meant to be 'universal'. He hopes that his pathologies spark recognition in the reader, as the reader comes to see Adorno's pathologies as their own. The tables turn as Adorno becomes the therapist.

In another way, Adorno attempts to challenge the reader's understanding of the world as they engage in deciphering his text, by selecting key words, phrases and ideas that awaken recognition in the reader and that lead to new ways of perceiving reality; he hopes that the reader discovers their own view of the world, and in a way, come to a better understanding of themselves; he hopes that through his text, the reader comes to question the very manner in which they ascertain knowledge; he hopes that they become more sensitive to the dangers of authoritative language.

Adorno's text is both pathological and psychoanalytical. As Fredric Jameson states:

[Adorno's] own philosophical practice . . . constitutes a virtually psychoanalytic acting out or talking cure, *abreaction*, of precisely that repressed mimetic impulse, allowing us once again to grasp some older relationship . . . we cannot reinstate or reinvent as such in 'modern times' . . . yet whose recovery by way of memory - indeed, whose anamnesis - is therapeutic in its own right.⁸³

Made up of interwoven themes, rich constellations and fragments, *Adorno's Philosophy of Modern Music* might seem to be a highly subjective book. Ironically, it is meant to be universal.

III

ADORNO'S ATONAL STYLE

Impact on the reader--Summary

Another influence in Adorno's writing is Schoenberg's music. As Jay notes, Adorno modelled aspects of his cryptical writing style after Schoenberg's atonality and dodecaphony - in an attempt to avoid pathologies identified by Freud, Nietzsche, Kraus and Benjamin. Not only does he take Schoenberg's music as a model of artistic and social achievement against which he criticises all other musics, Adorno attempts to capture the same individualistic, cathartic and socially responsible qualities in his writing that he perceives in Schoenberg's music.

⁸³ *Late Marxism*, p. 65.

According to Adorno, Schoenberg's atonal and serial music negates bourgeois and fascist signs in the listener through their emphasis on the equality of tones, and their spontaneously conceived harmonies and rhythms. By actively experiencing and completing Schoenberg's musical creations, the listener exercises their creativity and intuitively reinvents modern music. The music's painful, angst-ridden character explores those taboo emotions socially censored by commodified and 'official' art. Soon, the listener discovers their neglected, isolated, angst-ridden self, and false grafting to which they once ascribed through deceptively harmonious culture.

Adorno's writing parallels many qualities he perceives in Schoenberg's music. Like the latter, his writing is anti-conventional. Both avoid immediacy: stock associations and phrases. Both attempt to afford their audience a chance to reclaim their individuality. Both Schoenberg's music and Adorno's writing style seem haphazard, yet they are carefully conceived.

Schoenberg's music and Adorno's text bear the scars of a socially barbaric, technologically advanced age. According to Adorno, through its shop-keeper mathematical technique, Schoenberg's dodecaphonic music acts as a metaphor of capitalism and society, music and life dictated by economic concerns and not by humanitarian concerns. This economic dynamo pushes true, socially responsible art to the fringes. Schoenberg's 'natural' art emerges from a metaphorical rebellion against the 'guild-based' system.

Similarly, Adorno's writing avoids 'dogmatic' literary conventions. His writing is sometimes deliberately dogmatic so as to expose to the reader the dangers and deceptions of dogmatic language. Were one to abstract pitch organisations from Schoenberg's dodecaphonic music, they

would seem most arithmetical; were one to take Adorno's writing literally it would seem most uncritical. Ironically, Schoenberg's music aims to be truly musical. His system is designed to avoid musical clichés. Similarly, Adorno's writing aims to be truly critical not only of culture but also of the language used to discuss culture.

But while the influence of Schoenberg's music manifests itself in Adorno's literary style, the two German Jews also shared similar personal and social concerns. During the Weimar Era, both had hoped that reconciliation would be possible between Germans and Jews. After Hitler's assumption of the chancellorship in 1933, both Schoenberg and Adorno eventually sought exile in America. Both were deeply affected, if not obsessed, by the fate of the European Jews during the Holocaust. It is possible that in desperation, the Frankfurt scholar exaggerates Schoenberg's prominence as a composer in the hope that the world may take note of the Jews abandoned by an indifferent world.

Part Two

JEWISH SELF-IDENTIFICATION

I

Adorno's early critical theoretical context—Anglo-American positivism—

Adorno's subjective, affected tone—Intended effect on reader

As early as the mid-1890's, the early Frankfurt School attempted to 'reengage learning' away from scientific and philosophical methods of the time, and drew from various disciplines "to reunify fragmented knowledge in the social sciences without sacrificing the fruits of any of

them."⁸⁴ Encouraged by a time in which many young artists and intellectuals were beginning to question traditional values and beliefs, writers such as Durkheim and Weber drew freely from any relevant discipline in their pursuit of truth. They also relied upon what was considered by many German conservatives to be that new 'Jewish science', psychiatry.⁸⁵

By the time Adorno contributed (1920s-), radical philosophical discourse, like radical art during the Weimar Era, had become a political gesture that placed progressive social ideas over conservative ideas. Radical discourse sought, ultimately, reconciliation between outsiders and insiders, Jews and Germans.

Jay notes in his autobiographical book that Adorno and Horkheimer were among the first in the Frankfurt School to concentrate on the interrelationship between instrumental reason and fascism:

. . . instrumental reason was closely related to the exchange principle in which everything was reduced to an abstract equivalent of everything else in the service of universal exchange. . . Instrumental reason's inadvertently destructive effect was its link with the domination of nature. . . . Domination of the external natural world led to control of man's internal nature and ultimately of the social world as well.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Rose, pp. 1-2. The official Frankfurt School was established in 1923.

⁸⁵ In line with the early Frankfurt School scholars, Adorno wrote in 1930:

The separation of sociology and psychology is both correct and false. False because it encourages the specialists to relinquish the attempt to know the totality which even the separation of the two demands; and correct insofar as it registers more intransigently the split that has actually taken place in reality than does the premature unification that the level of theory, p. 87.

In "Sociology and Psychology," trans. Irving N. Wohlfahrt, *New Left Review*, 46 (1967), 87.

⁸⁶ Adorno, pp. 37-38.

Hitler recognised the need for clear, simple, rational language to further his ideology to the German masses. As he stated (1924):

The Aryan is not greatest in his mental qualities as such, but in the extent of his willingness to put all his abilities in the service of the community. In him the instinct of self-preservation has reached the noblest form, since he willingly subordinates his own ego to the life of the community and, if the hour demands, even sacrifices it.⁸⁷

Scattered throughout Adorno's texts are remarks concerning the dangers of non-reflexive, simple, immediate language. The scholar seems weary of its power to cause motor-reflex action: "Political slogans designed for mass manipulation unanimously stigmatise [radical culture as] 'luxury', 'snobbism', and 'highbrow'. . . ."⁸⁸ As John H. Hanson,⁸⁹ Peter H. Merkl,⁹⁰ and Sybil Milton⁹¹ note, after his rise to power, Hitler transformed what would now be considered socially undesirable traits such as 'fanaticism' (in the defence of the Fatherland) into attributes worthy of praise.

⁸⁷ Cited in Wilfried Van der Will's, "The body and the body politic as symptom and metaphor in the transition of German culture to national socialism," in *The Nazification of Art*, ed. Brandon Taylor and Wilfried van der Will (Winchester: Winchester Press, 1990), p. 15.

⁸⁸ *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. E.B. Asthon (New York: Seabury, 1976), p. 132.

⁸⁹ "Nazi Culture: The Social Uses of Fantasy as Repression," in *Psychoanalytic Reflections on the Holocaust: Selected Essays*, eds. Steven A. Luel and Paul Marcus (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1984), pp. 35-52.

⁹⁰ "The Corruption of Public Life in Weimar Germany," in *The Holocaust: Ideology, Bureaucracy and Genocide*, eds. Henry Friedlander and Sybil Milton (New York: Kraus International Publications, 1984), pp. 63-68.

⁹¹ "Artists in the Third Reich," in *The Holocaust: Ideology, Bureaucracy, and Genocide*, eds. Henry Friedlander and Sybil Milton (New York: Kraus International Publications, 1984), pp. 115-129.

The Nazis concentrated on the labouring classes in their election campaign and they relied upon songs with simple, direct language to propagate ideology. By the late 1920s, 'Völkisch' songs with lyrics such as the following flourished:

One man, we, both young and old,
Embrace the swastika flag.
Farmers and burghers and workers,
Germans, wake up; and death to the Jew.
Folk take arms;

or,

Blood, blood, blood must flow,
As thick and deep as hailstones,
Fed up we are with all the freedom,
Of the Jewish [Weimar] Republic.⁹²

To be *fanatisch* (or a *Fanatiker*) in exorcising Germany of its internal and external 'otherness' was regarded as a social virtue.⁹³ It is possible that Hitler's direct, communicative, authoritative language encouraged Adorno to adopt his anti-conventional rhetorical style.

Leo Lowenthal writes "Adorno's intellectual biography even in its most aesthetic abstractions is marked by the experience of fascism"⁹⁴ and

⁹² Cited in Vernon Lidtke's, "Songs and Nazis; Political Music and Social Change in Twentieth-Century Germany," in *Essays on Culture and Society in Modern Germany*, eds. by Gary D. Stark and Bede Karl Lackner (Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1982), p. 183.

⁹³ For more on this, and related topics, see *Essays on Culture and Society in Modern Germany*, eds. Gary D. Stark and Bede Karl Lackner (Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 1982).

⁹⁴ *Critical Theory*, p. 162. Lowenthal also writes in "Recollections of Theodor W. Adorno, "the not any longer complications between Germans and Jews is something one should bear in mind in order to fully understand Adorno's personal history," p. 159.

in America (1939-1948), it appears that Adorno's rebellion against Anglo-American positivism becomes, in one sense, a rebellion against fascism itself.

During the writing of the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno resided mostly in California, close to Hollywood. There, he was reminded constantly of the media's tendency to suppress information and to present a selective view of reality to its audiences. While deceptively clear modes of speech in media reached larger masses, they lowered the expressive potential of human interaction. Adorno also perceived that the media could greatly influence collective perceptions. This, in return, retarded human consciousness. Direct language in film, radio, and text in America, as in Germany, could control society and propagate ideology.

While in America, Adorno draws parallels between the Nazi's and the culture industry's use of simple, direct language to prescribe emotional reactions and ideologies. Adorno is astounded to see the degree to which direct (fascist) language from above has now become the language of below. In *Minima Moralia* (1940) he exaggerates the conventions of conversations at an American cocktail party:

The direct statement without divagations, hesitations or reflections, that gives the other the facts full in the face, already has the form and timbre of the command issued under fascism by the dumb and to the silent. Matter-of-factness between people, doing away with all ideological ornamentation between them, has already itself become an ideology for treating people as things.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ (1974), p. 118. See also Peter Hohendahl's "Adorno's American Years Revisited", pp. 85-88.

Adorno believed that direct communication afforded power to those who owned the means of propagating their ideology. More importantly, he believed that direct rhetoric reified society's view of the world. It limited experience and the ability to feel. It also afforded the culture industries power to use 'other' forms of communication, in this case, psycho-technological language to control the masses through overt and subliminal suggestions. Without the ability to feel, and the perception of the world now in the hands of culture industries, masses or even nations could be made to take part in or tolerate atrocities.

In an effort to avoid what he considers to be fascistic dictations, Adorno imbues his cryptical text with irony. He mocks direct language now taken up by capitalistic monopolies. To avoid creating an 'authoritarian text', he renders the *Philosophy of Modern Music* intentionally labyrinthine.

But perhaps it is Adorno who is caught in a labyrinth. In one sense, he hopes to bring Jewish culture to the forefront for revaluation. Yet he cannot take a direct stance. This would be dogmatic, and would be similar to the means used by fascist authorities to colour the perceptions of their audiences. And in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, he exaggerates, understates, uses syntax to convey meaning and pushes his portrayal of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, kitsch and avant-garde art to the edge. Adorno can no longer write in an immediate fashion, for to do so would be to dictate truth, like Hitler.

By carrying on debates with his late cousin Walter Benjamin, a victim of the Nazis, by making references and observations that were intended only for those familiar with the European humanist tradition,

Adorno's book seems caught somewhere between writing for his readers, his colleagues, and for himself - as a form of intellectual survival.

Like *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, the *Philosophy of Modern Music* could easily be considered a very personal book. The theme of humanity and the loss of humanity in (late) capitalist society is laden with Adorno's own vested interest in the Jews, and his profound sorrow at the Nazis' corruption of humanitarian German culture to further fascism. The *Philosophy of Modern Music's* withdrawal into reflections, obtuse arguments and subtle references seem at first glance to be the result of arrogance. When examined closely, it is more likely that the work records Adorno's own tragic past, and his fragile present. As he wrote during the early 1940s:

In his text, the writer sets up house. Just as he trundles papers, books, pencils, documents untidily from room to room, he creates the same disorder in his thought. They become pieces of furniture that he sinks into, content or irritable. He strokes them affectionately, wears them out, mixes them up rearranges, ruins them. For a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live.⁹⁶

It is possible that at times his abreaactions are not merely constructions but actually true testaments of Adorno's profound sense of loss. The *Philosophy of Modern Music* seems to bear the frustration an impotent Jewish scholar marginalised by language, an alien environment and what he perceived as an increasingly destructive legacy of instrumental, economic rationalism. At first glance, therefore, there

⁹⁶ *Minima Moralia*, p. 87.

seems to be an almost pathological distrust of rational language. Like its polemic, logical positivism, rationalism leads to a domination of internal and external nature. Like logical positivism, rationalism produces a 'forgetting' and a hysterical fear of intellectual, social and cultural 'otherness'. Exclusive instrumental reason contributes to the extinction of critical thinking. Society begins to perceive itself and others only from such perspectives, and are dumbfounded or threatened by irrationality, individuality or difference: 'Mythical' society "at the hands of later generations who discover themselves in them - is also its truth."⁹⁷

The tone of the *Philosophy of Modern Music* is often desperate. This, along with its cryptical nature, its *allegedly* caustic criticisms of Stravinsky and its glorifying portrait of Schoenberg has been more than enough reason to overlook the book. Despite the personal trials and fears Adorno faced during this period, it is all the more remarkable that he manages to sustain his dialectical rigour.

Understanding Adorno's writing requires a methodological approach. Often, Adorno's critique of Schoenberg and Stravinsky recedes as the scholar examines how fascist artists used culture to undermine the proletariat or how avant-garde artists opposed the fascists through socially revealing and responsible art. Benjamin Ward intuitively suggests their symbolic representation when he writes:

[Adorno's] penchant for overstatement and hyperbole comes to the fore especially in the sections on Stravinsky: he speaks of Stravinsky's "dictatorial instrumentation" . . . and sees in the composer's neoprimitive rhythms the objective correlate of fascism.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 123.

⁹⁸ P. 310. Despite his many excellent observations, Ward fails to recognise Adorno's poetic intentions in *The Philosophy of Modern Music*. Yet, Ward encircles this idea

Even Adorno's desperation adds urgency to his text. Rather than perpetuating selective rational and empirical views of cultural phenomena, in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno insists on balancing order with chaos, objectivity with subjectivity. The scholar's intention is to "show up this illusory integrity (false consciousness) to bring chaos into the order of the self to make raw appeal to sensibility as the only hope for self consciousness."⁹⁹

Adorno points us towards other issues that impact upon music-making such as mass psychology, semiotics, and the acculturation process in mass culture. He suggests insights into the meaning and function of state and monopoly culture in the twentieth century. He explores ideas and themes that are often overlooked in a pragmatic analysis, but are nevertheless essential if one is to gain a more 'complete' analysis of given musical phenomena.

His densely woven, poetic style is intended to balance our Cartesian academic approach. His style is also intended to balance the shotgun immediacy of billboard language so common in everyday discourse, mass media, advertisement and propaganda.

Ideally, in reading Adorno's text not only do we exercise our creative, intellectual and intuitive faculties, but we also learn to qualify his ideas, and ultimately the authority of 'experts'. As we oscillate between the rational and the irrational, the literal and the symbolic, the subjective and the objective, between the role of the reader and the writer of the text, we become the recipient of dialectic interactions. Ideally, we catch glimpses of the fragmented whole.

when he writes, "In *Prisms*, for example, he finds not quite so great a critical, negative thrust in Schoenberg's works he had found . . . in *Philosophy of Modern Music*," p. 310.

⁹⁹ Kuspit, p. 324.

II

STYLISTIC EVALUATION

Nietzschian Irony—Adorno's use of music as a metaphor for a critique of discursive praxis—Jewish references—Adorno's projected impotence onto the text—Effect on the reader

This section presents an analysis of the final sentences of the section, "Schoenberg and Progress." It highlights Adorno's use of metaphors, allusions, ironic inversions and other such devices, and also the similarities between Adorno's writing and that of other influential scholars:

To this effort does modern music sacrifice itself. All the darkness and guilt of the world it has taken upon itself. All its fortune lies in its recognition of misfortune; all of its beauty lies in its denial of the illusion of beauty. No one wants to have anything to do with modern music, individualists as little as collectives. It dies away unheard, without an echo. When time shoots around the heard music into a shining crystal, then the unheard music falls into empty time like a perishable bullet. New music is spontaneously positioned towards this last experience, to the absolute forgetting which mechanical music goes through hourly. Modern music is the true message in a bottle.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Dem opfert sich die neue Musik. Alle Dunkelheit und Schuld der Welt hat sie auf sich genommen. All ihr Glück hat sie daran, das Unglück zu erkennen; all ihre Schönheit, dem Schein des Schönen sich zu versagen. Keiner will mit ihr etwas zu tun

In the above section, Adorno uses anaphora. The second, third and fourth phrases all begin with 'all'. The statement, "no one wants to have anything to do with modern music, individualists as little as collectives," is intentionally exaggerated, dramatic and subjective. It aims to move the reader emotionally as does the writing of Kraus.

Like Benjamin, Adorno encircles two force-fields in this section, namely the slow death of humanitarian art, and using music as a metaphor, the slow death of criticism in late capitalist society. In the process, he makes indirect references to personal friends, and the fate of the Jews during the Holocaust.

A la Nietzsche, Adorno uses irony to expose the false nature of commodified art: "[Modern Music's] fortune lies in its recognition of misfortune; All of [modern music's] beauty lies in its denial of the illusion of beauty." Art today has become static, frozen like Hitler's official culture. Truth is now, ironically the opposite of what we perceive it to be. Adorno exaggerates to make the point that criticism itself is no longer criticism. It too has become static, frozen, confined by conventions and academic praxis.

Classical music-making dominates concert halls and media due mostly to the economic rationalisation of culture industrialists whose aim is to sell the most products regardless of artistic integrity. Responsible art and the criticism of art are marginalised, forced into 'sub-cultural' status (universities), away from the masses.

haben, die Individuellen so wenig wie die Kollektiven. Sie verhallt ungehört, ohne Echo. Schießt um die gehörte Musik die Zeit zum strahlenden Kristall zusammen, so fällt die ungehörte in die leere Zeit gleich einer verderblichen Kugel. Auf diese letzte Erfahrung hin, die mechanische Musik stündlich durchmacht, ist die neue Musik spontan angelegt, auf das absolute Vergessensein. Sie ist die wahre Flaschenpost, p. 126.

When he states "modern music is the true message in a bottle," the philosopher acknowledges his friends and colleagues. As Leo Lowenthal remarks in "Recollections of Adorno," during the Weimar Era and especially in exile, members of the Frankfurt school would often refer to their writing as a *Flaschenpost*. When Adorno writes, 'Schoenberg's music has taken upon itself all the darkness and sins of the world,' or 'its beauty lies in its denial of the illusion of beauty,' Adorno also discusses his own writing style: the merit of his writing does not rest in its stylistic beauty but in the beauty of its purpose.

In typical dramatic fashion, Adorno depicts Schoenberg as an old-testament prophet, and his work as a sacrifice. He states: "[Modern music] has taken upon itself all the darkness and guilt of the world." Like the promised saviour in the *Old Testament* who 'has taken upon himself all the darkness and sins of the world', Schoenberg's message offers the chance for redemption and reconciliation. His message is enlightening for a modern society - well along the road to intellectual, artistic and social extinction.

If Schoenberg is the prophet, then Adorno is the messenger, perhaps an Aaron: the voice in the wilderness proclaiming the virtues of the prophet. An affirmation of his Jewish heritage is to be found, therefore, when the author alludes to the *Old Testament*.

Adorno states, "When time shoots around the heard music into a shining crystal, then the unheard music falls into empty time like a perishable bullet." If enlightening music and criticism aren't heard, then no battle is waged against fascist culture. The masses stand to fall victim to the Sphinx because they fail to guess the riddle of deceptive authorities.

Despite the difficulty encountered in reading Adorno, paradoxically, it is with the reader in mind that he writes in the manner that he does. Ultimately, however, the philosopher isn't hostile towards rationalism and logical positivism in themselves as he is towards the manner in which they are currently used - to subjugate and suppress humanity. Adorno presents the 'chaotic' to the 'orderly' reader so that they may benefit from the dialectical interaction between the rational and irrational, subjective and objective, individualistic and universal. Ideally, the reader glimpses the 'fragmented whole'.

Hence, from a literary perspective, Adorno's *Philosophy of Modern Music* is also an ambitious attempt to rescue criticism from extinction. Whereas traditional philosophy searches for universals and is conformist in its rhetorical devices, Adorno insists on his unique perspective and rhetorical style. Whereas conventional philosophy purifies language for consistent usage and meaning, Adorno insists on the fluidity and ambiguities of language. Whereas traditional philosophy relies upon coherence and systematic logic, Adorno distorts logic through antinomical premises. He shows that reality is made up of contradictions, antinomies, parallels - sometimes all occurring simultaneously. He is not 'persuasive' or 'elegant' but means to challenge and shock, not to totalise but to open fissures and lacunae.

From a musicological perspective, Adorno attacks conventional musicological clichés, and discursive models. He implicitly claims that scientific models (Schenkerian analysis, for example) sterilise the experience of music. Similarly, 'immediate' discourse by the musical 'expert' suppresses the creative and intellectual potential of 'non-experts'.

In modern society, the canon is influenced greatly by economic impulses and issues of power. Through exclusive rational models, critical canons find a means of selectively choosing what aspect of musical phenomena they wish to develop and to suppress - in the same manner that politicians and industrialists administer truth to their 'citizens'. At its lamest, writing about music becomes a form of dictating truth, a means of self-denial, censorship, and social control. Conventional criticism reflects a fear of radicalism, subjectivity, and irrationality: it reflects a fear of 'otherness'. Music contains both order and chaos, subjectivity and objectivity, rationality and irrationality.

Chapter Three concentrates on the socio-psychological, and musical aesthetic issues Adorno addresses in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*.

CHAPTER THREE

INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONCEPTS IN THE *PHILOSOPHY OF MODERN MUSIC*

Introduction

In his book, *Adorno*, Martin Jay highlights several tendencies or constellations in Adorno's thinking: Western and Hegelian Marxism, aesthetic modernism, Freudian psychology, Nietzschean irony, Mandarin cultural despair, and Jewish self-identification. Jay does not reduce Adorno's philosophy to common denominators, but instead, he suggests impulses and negations that simultaneously construct and deconstruct patterns of a fluid reality.¹⁰¹

It would be false to suggest that Adorno's ideas on music-making emerge from only those constellations cited by Jay or those presented in this thesis.¹⁰² Indeed, Adorno's influences are numerous.¹⁰³ All of Adorno's works are unique in the philosophical issues they address and in the influences they exhibit. In the process of his discussion on twentieth-century culture, Adorno adopts, resists and abrogates the aesthetic philosophies of Hegel, Lukacs, and Benjamin, and the socio-

¹⁰¹ P. 15.

¹⁰² Indeed, Jay is the first to quip about his 'reductionist' approach: "Adorno, in fact, was highly suspicious of any attempt to extricate the content of ideas from the form of their presentation," p. 12. Throughout *Adorno*, Jay makes references to other thinkers that influenced the Frankfurt scholar.

¹⁰³ Gillian Rose's *The Melancholy Science* also includes a discussion on the stylistic similarities between Weber and Adorno; Max Paddison's *Adorno's Aesthetic of Music* introduces the numerous influences found in Adorno's 'critical theory of music' including Krenek. Adorno's output reflects his interdisciplinary scholarship. He has written seminal works in the 'fields' of philosophy, psychology, musicology, sociology, and literature. Often, as in the *Philosophy of Modern Music* and *Minima Moralia*, Adorno draws freely from these various disciplines. As Jay suggests in *Adorno*, perhaps any commentary on his scholarship is a reductionism.

psychological concepts of Le Bon, Freud and Jung. The aesthetic ideas of Nietzsche are of the utmost importance to Adorno.

Part One introduces the aesthetic themes of Hegel, Lukacs, and Benjamin with which Adorno contends. Part Two introduces the socio-psychological concepts of Le Bon, Freud, and Jung Adorno uses to do musicological work. Part Three suggests how Adorno's socio-cultural context may have affected his choice of issues he raises. Part Four introduces the aesthetic ideas of Nietzsche Adorno criticises in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*.

Part One

WESTERN HEGELIAN MARXISM

I

Hegel's historical process of enlightenment—Adorno's critique of Hegel—Adorno's views on progressive and regressive music—A summary of Benjamin's, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"—Adorno's redefinition of aura through kitsch and avant-garde music—Lukacs' conceptions of reification, rationalism and the social totality—Lukacs' and Adorno's polemic views on modern art music—Adorno's reformulations of Lukacs' use of reification, rationalism and the social totality

Hegel argues that truth is the agreement of thought with the object. He identifies dialectical models of ascertaining truth through an interaction of the following elements: a) Experience, or immediacy of being (*Sein*), b) Reflection upon the unknown, and c) Philosophical cognition.

Philosophical cognition is the mediated outcome between experience and reflection. Evolved philosophical cognition is achieved through the dialectical interaction between experience and reflection and a mediated outcome between these two elements.¹⁰⁴ In Hegel's system, there is thesis (experience), antithesis (reflection), leading to synthesis (philosophical cognition).

Society's grasp of truth through dialectics (experience, reflection, then cognition) progresses through time. 'Truth', however, is influenced by its given temporal and spatial context. Truth evolves. Through time, society moves towards absolute knowledge or towards an understanding of the 'absolute spirit' or God. As society gains more insight into the world, it gains more insight into the way in which the world functions - it comes closer to God.¹⁰⁵ Hegel contends therefore that truth is evolutionary and historical. And truth, as in art, cannot be judged except within its given historical context.

With increasing knowledge of the world, comes increasing human freedom. Hegel contends that the more we understand the nature of the Absolute, the less superstitious and less susceptible to myth we become.

Revelations of God and his handiwork occur through art, religion and philosophy. As time progresses, dialectical mediations occur (thesis, antithesis and synthesis) within and between these fields. Antagonisms are eventually resolved. Art, religion and philosophy progress dialectically until God comes to self-knowledge through human knowledge. Through our domination of nature we understand the workings of the Absolute. This brings us closer to God.

¹⁰⁴ *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, edited by Tom Bottomore (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985), p. 276.

¹⁰⁵ G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, translated by F. Osmaston (New York: Hacker Fine Art, 1975), p. 276.

Thus, history is the history of a progressive human consciousness. If a society ceases to progress, it self-destructs. Within a larger time span, societies are either in a state of progress or regress, construction or destruction, leading towards or away from God. As a crucial part of the enlightenment process, art acts in a dynamic state of progress or regress. Art mirrors and contributes to the way in which a society flows.

Music, for example, can afford us experience. This experience can provide the necessary material for 'philosophical' reflection. Reflection upon musical emotional experiences lead to philosophical cognition.¹⁰⁶ In contrast, music that fails to crystallise contemporary experiences or that diverts us from reflecting upon our emotional selves can lead to internal death. If music-making is out of synchronisation with contemporary life, it can lead to the death of art that can contribute to the destruction of civilisation itself.

According to Hegel, music that is in touch with the spirit of the time (*Zeitgeist*) is crucial to aesthetic self-realisation. Great music crystallises the *Zeitgeist*. It provides experiences that can illuminate historical reality. The spirit works, however, only as long as the work of art is in synchronicity with the *Zeitgeist*. Music dies (temporarily) when it ceases to give form to or express emotional insights into the age. When music fails to crystallise the *Zeitgeist*, the spirit now moves beyond the confines of art. Music no longer provides the necessary experience upon which one can reflect to bring enlightenment. Music that is out-of-touch with the *Zeitgeist* is socially destructive.

A reliance on past aesthetics kills art.¹⁰⁷ Such a reliance dissociates humans from their given temporal and spatial context. Similarly, music

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-64.

that is 'too' free also moves beyond the realm of the spirit. It is too subjective. It nullifies the possibility of enlightening the collective. True art must maintain 'objectivity' and capture the essential experience of its given temporal and spatial context. It must be socially responsible and provide experiences so that society can reflect upon them and, ideally, become more humane. Enlightened music brings one closer to God; destructive music leads one away from God.

Hegel's conceptions concerning the progressive ascension to an understanding of the Absolute and its resulting freedom is one issue Adorno tackles in his portrayal of the music of Schoenberg and Stravinsky in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*.

Adorno disagrees with Hegel's concept that history and art progress concurrently towards freedom and towards a deeper appreciation of God. By 1944, Adorno (and Horkheimer) had perceived civilisation as epitomised in the passage from the means of the slingshot to the atom bomb. Adorno contended that enlightenment had spawned its antithesis - barbarism.

In *Aesthetic Theory* (1969), the Frankfurt scholar redefines Hegel's concept of progress of art:

All progress in the cultural sphere is that of the domination of material of technique . . . Progress in the domination of material is in no sense directly identical to the progress of art itself.¹⁰⁸

In other words, although 'schooled composers' can elicit specific emotional reactions from their audiences for commercial purposes,

¹⁰⁸ Trans. C. Lenhardt, eds. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (Boston: Routledge and K. Paul, 1984), p. 78.

Adorno makes the distinction that this domination of material does not necessarily reflect the progress of art. True art dominates material to return it to the realm of the truly mythical or natural. Therefore, the domination of art does not necessarily mean the progression of art. In capitalist society, the domination of art has led to the destruction of art and of humanity itself.

Adorno also disagrees with Hegel's idea that advanced society's evolution is characterised by a gradual sublation of antagonisms. Modern society is characterised by monopolies' one-sided interest in profit. Administrations use their knowledge of internal and external environments to profit financially. Even artists must now bow to the values of administered society to survive financially: "At this present stage, the artist is incomparably much less free than Hegel could have imagined at the beginning of the liberal era."¹⁰⁹ The domination of nature does not lead to freedom for artists in the modern age, it leads to their loss of freedom.

The Frankfurt scholar agrees with Hegel, however, that a reliance on past aesthetics kills art. For the most part, concert halls today satiate audiences with corrosive, numbing neoclassical and classical music. They perpetuate a static musical legacy that cannot crystallise the necessary experiences required for society to reflect upon and thus gain philosophical insights into contemporary capitalist society. "Across all borders, the epigones are similar to the hostility of epigones in feeble mixture of compositional knowledge and helplessness."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Auf der gegenwärtigen Stufe steht dem Künstler unvergleichlich viel weniger frei, als Hegel zu Beginn der liberalen Ära denken konnte, p.25.

¹¹⁰ Über alle Landesgrenzen hinweg ähneln sich die Epigonen der Epigonenfeindschaft in schwächlichen Mixturen aus Versiertheit und Hilflosigkeit, p. 16.

Adorno's fundamental difficulty with Hegel stems from Hegel's insistence on the triadic model of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, the pattern that leads towards the eventual realisation of absolute freedom and consciousness:

The progress of music towards total freedom of the subject would appear to be completely irrational; [Schoenberg] dissolves the understandable comprehension of superficiality with his enveloping musical language.¹¹¹

Adorno argues that historical artistic truth does not progress in a dialectical manner but is fragmented and contains simultaneous progressions and regressions. The very design of the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, with its polemical treatment of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, reveals the dubiousness of Hegel's model.¹¹²

Adorno exaggerates the polemic, however, between progressive and regressive art in his effort to make the text have literal, symbolic and theoretical dimensions.

At the literal and symbolic levels, Adorno treats Stravinsky's music as manipulative art that encourages barbaric tendencies in modern society. Instead of enlightening, Stravinsky's later compositions, a representative of neoclassical Nazi art, promote the power of authorities over individuals. They further internal self-annihilation because they censor and kill experience.

¹¹¹ Der Fortschritt der Musik zur vollen Freiheit des Subjekts stellt nach dem Maße des Bestehenden selber als irrational sich dar, insofern er mit der umfangenden musikalischen Sprache die faßliche Logik des Oberflächenzusammenhangs weithin auflöst, p. 128.

¹¹² See also Rose's discussion on Adorno's critique of Hegel in Chapter Two of *The Melancholy Science*.

In contrast, Adorno argues that through his mastery of atonal and serial technique, Schoenberg crystallises the *Zeitgeist*. Like the works of Joyce, Kafka, Picasso and others, Schoenberg's creative, emotional insights into our pathological, dissociated state in modern industrial society venture into the unconscious to capture the *Zeitgeist*. His works evoke experiences necessary that could lead us along the path of enlightenment. Using the Jewish composer as the representative, Adorno writes that Schoenberg concludes "the liberation of ever broader layers of (musical) material and the musical domination of nature which progresses towards the Absolute."¹¹³

At the theoretical level, Adorno opposes Hegel when he claims that while technology progresses, humanity 'regresses'. He also disagrees with Hegel when he shows that certain types of 'subjective' art can be 'objective' and socially responsible. Adorno agrees with Hegel, however, that art must provide experiences of the age. Schoenberg's music, for example, enlightens listeners to the pathologies of the age, and provides the experiences necessary to awaken us to our coopted state.

Walter Benjamin's conceptions of the sterilising impact of reproductive technology in capitalist society figure prominently in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*. They become crucial points of departure for Adorno's critique of the impact of culture in capitalist society. To show how Adorno transforms Benjamin's conceptions, it is first necessary to outline those relevant themes found in Benjamin's, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," and "Author as Producer."

¹¹³ Schönberg . . . der Freisetzung immer breiterer Materialschichten und der zum Absoluten fortschreitenden musikalischen Naturbeherrschung, p.193.

In "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"¹¹⁴ Benjamin argues that fine art initially found its expression in the cult, in the service of the ritual - first in magic then in religious practices. Art and its magical aura, i.e., essence, authority and authenticity were never separated from its ritualistic function until the photograph. Like the phonograph, another product of reproduction, the photograph could enter into situations out of reach of the original: "The cathedral leaves its locale to be received in the studio of a lover of art; the choral production, performed in an auditorium or in open air resounds in the drawing room."¹¹⁵ Reproductions diffused the aura of the original.

Mass culture, i.e., photographs, records and other cultural products, caused a reaction among certain artists. Bourgeois art emerged, a 'theology' in the form of 'pure' art whose intention was to restore the lost aura of art. Socially, abstract art was soon taken up by the bourgeois for it continued the legacy of exclusive appreciation. The film and other reproductive media brought art to the masses. Abstract art continued the legacy of art for the elite.

In twentieth-century society, modern 'elitist' and popular artworks are increasingly designed for reproducibility. This is due in part to the prevailing influence of mass production. Reproduction extinguishes aura. But the instant aura is lost, "instead of [artistic production] being based on ritual, it begins to be based on another practice - politics."¹¹⁶ Abstract art, diffused of its aura through reproduction, becomes a political gesture. It becomes culture for the privileged or the

¹¹⁴ Trans. Harry Zohn, in *Art after Modernism*, ed. Brian Wallis (1936, London: Paul Chapman, 1988), p. 220.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 220.

'connoisseur'. In contrast, film acts as culture of the masses. It demystifies the aura of abstract art.

Reproduction in popular art can be used to further mass revolutionary ideologies against the upper classes. Benjamin argues that technological reproduction impacts on how society conducts and perceives itself and the world. Reproduction is linked to mass society, and collective beliefs. Were one interested in rallying the masses against authorities, the film would be the ideal medium to further revolutionary messages (It is quite possible that Benjamin implicitly refers to the role film played in the Russian Revolution and Wilhelm's Germany in opposing official bourgeois culture).

The power of the film to demystify abstract art and to incite revolution is also dealt with in Benjamin's article, "The Author as Producer." But in the latter, he claims that the film possesses another power. Through its montage and narrative qualities, film turns against itself and causes the individual to want to assume control over the next event in the series. The individual identifies with certain characters on the screen and is better able to examine their own circumstances in a more objective manner. The individual learns to assert themselves, to change life's events in the same way they hope characters in the films would change their lives.

Backed by an intelligentsia, the film could cause revolutionary behaviour:

For we are faced by the fact - of which the past decade in Germany has furnished an abundance of examples - that the bourgeois apparatus of production and publication can assimilate astonishing qualities of revolutionary themes, indeed, can

propagate them without calling its own existence, and the existence of the class which owns it, seriously into question.¹¹⁷

Through films, the proletariat could learn to resist the mechanical, dehumanising effects of an administered and controlled society.

In his letter of November 10, 1936 to Benjamin,¹¹⁸ Adorno discusses themes of "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" and the "Author as Producer." The issues Adorno raises would become central themes in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*.

Despite the fact that Benjamin's formulations "step on all of Adorno's toes,"¹¹⁹ he is impressed by its theme:

You know that the subject of the 'liquidation of art' has for many years underlain my aesthetic studies and that my emphatic espousal of the primacy of technology especially in music, must be understood strictly in this sense . . . I proposed formulations about technology which are in perfect accord with your own.¹²⁰

Despite his accolades, Adorno's rejoinder raises several concerns. His major contention lies in Benjamin's generalisations regarding abstract art and his romantic depiction of the film. To Adorno, the film creates its own type of aura, "if anything contains an auratic character, it is the film which possesses it to an extreme and highly suspect degree."¹²¹ Benjamin underestimates the film's power to control society. Communists and

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 215-216.

¹¹⁸ "Letters to Walter Benjamin" (1935-1938), trans. Harry Zohn, in *Aesthetics and Politics*, ed. Ronald Taylor (London: New Left Books, 1977), pp. 121-126.

¹¹⁹ Buck-Morss, p. 172.

¹²⁰ Letters, p. 121.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

capitalists (can) use film to reassure, control and manipulate their audiences. Adorno claims that ideology dictated through art, whether by communists or by fascists, leads to tribal behaviour. Benjamin's sanctioning of the use of film to propagate a communist revolution goes against the very foundation of communism: to afford freedom to the proletariat.

Adorno agrees, however, with Benjamin that art must oppose elitist art. Yet, Adorno is confounded by Benjamin's one-sided view that all *l'art pour l'art* is elitist:

If you defend the kitsch film against the quality film, no one can be more in agreement with you than I am; but *l'art pour l'art* is just as much in need of a defence, and the united front which exists against it and which to my knowledge extends from Brecht to the [Nazi] Youth Movement, would be encouragement enough to undertake a rescue.¹²²

Benjamin's hostility towards conservatives and fascists projected onto his view of autonomous art causes Adorno to say, "Dialectical though your essay may be, it is not so in the case of the autonomous work of art itself."¹²³ He continues:

. . . I am fully aware of the magical element in the bourgeois work of art particularly since I constantly attempt to expose the bourgeois philosophy of idealism . . . which is associated with the concept of aesthetic autonomy, as mythical in the fullest sense.¹²⁴

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 125.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

To Adorno 'autonomous' art is made up of numerous 'fluid' subcategories, subcategories determined by an object's intrinsic artistic elements and its extrinsic meaning:

It seems to me that the centre of the autonomous work of art, does not itself belong on the side of myth - but is inherently dialectical; within itself it juxtaposes the magical and the mark of freedom.¹²⁵

In the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, he asks two questions aimed at revealing those very qualities Benjamin overlooks: "what difficulties/problems pushed the works to adopt such a style? How does the stylistic ideal react to the material of the composition and its constructive totality?"¹²⁶ By treating music as immanent as does Hegel, and using music as a symbol of art, Adorno arrives at a different position from Benjamin regarding the role of avant-garde art.

In terms of music, he agrees with Benjamin that there are essentially two general types of music-making today: kitsch and the avant-garde. These, however, are macro-categories. For Adorno, kitsch implies: a) traditional classical music, the music of Bach, Beethoven and other great artists now distorted through packaging and processing; b) European neoclassical and *Gebrauchsmusik*, art music that (indirectly or directly) buys into the ideology of fascism (1920s - 1944); c) false progressive [or false 'enlightenment'] music, music that is endorsed fallaciously by culture administrations as 'modern' music, particularly the music of Richard Strauss, Malipiero, and Stravinsky. Stravinsky's 'fascist'

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

¹²⁶ ... welche Not der Werke diese zu solchem Stil dränge, oder wie das Stilideal zum Material des Werkes und seiner konstruktiven Totalität sich verhalte . . . , p.14.

music falls into two categories, neoclassical music (1920s - 1940s) and false enlightenment music.

Avant-garde music implies: a) Schoenberg's atonal and twelve-tone music, and the modern works of his disciples, Berg, Webern or Krenek; b) superserial music, the music of the Darmstadt School; c) aleatory music, i.e., the music of Dadaists or John Cage. As the consummate example of revolutionary art, Schoenberg's music revolts against oppressive authorities; as the consummate example of elitist art, Stravinsky's music encourages Europeans to become a part of the administered collective. Adorno uses kitsch and avant-garde music to represent kitsch and avant-garde culture in (late) capitalist society. Kitsch and avant-garde art during state capitalist society, the Third Reich, become examples of kitsch and avant-garde culture in twentieth-century capitalist society.

At the symbolic level, not only does fascist art mutate the audience's ability to feel through its 'reproduced' aesthetics, but it is also 'auratic' - in a whole new way. It achieves its essence through its crystallisation of official fascist ideology during the Weimar era and the Third Reich. Its authority comes from its links to the regimes of leaders such as Mussolini, Franco and Hitler.¹²⁷ Its authenticity comes from the efforts of fascist administrations that sell kitsch art as authentic art. It hardly makes a difference whether kitsch art is steeped in worn-out clichés. What is sold by the authorities as 'new', is accepted by the masses as such.

¹²⁷ Stravinsky's blatant support of Mussolini, Franco, and members of the *Reichsmusikkammer* during the Second World-War is clearly evident in his correspondences to these various individuals. See in Robert Craft and Vera Stravinsky's, *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents* (London: Hutchinson, 1979). Craft's major contribution to *Pictures and Documents* is in writing the commentary.

Adorno implicitly contends that the 'political agenda' and the auratic elements of art could have been explored to a far greater degree than Benjamin managed to accomplish in his essays. It is his failure to explore the inner characteristics of art that contributes to his one-sided account.

Using music as the symbol, Adorno claims that Benjamin glosses over the different artistic and extra-artistic subtleties of avant-garde works, and fails to assess the social impact of the loss of experience in the age of mechanical reproduction.

Indeed, the entire thesis of the *Philosophy of Modern Music* centres around Benjamin's ideas concerning the loss of meaningful essence, authority and authenticity - humanity - in the age of mechanical reproduction. Whereas Benjamin argues that this serves the interests of the proletariat, Adorno claims the opposite, it makes the proletariat anaesthetised, and inhumane. This lack of experience creates a dissociated state that allows individuals to permit or carry out atrocious acts without remorse:

We know today how deeply the often denounced subjectivism of the so-called atonal avant-garde was bound up from the beginning with functionalism, with those tendencies within art which try to regain its real dignity by purifying it from all the remnants of Romanticism which today are nothing but empty pretences.¹²⁸

Contra Benjamin, salient avant-garde art is revolutionary in an individualistic rather than in a communal way. It exposes the individual

¹²⁸ "What National Socialism has done to the Arts" (1945), *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. 20, bk.2, eds. Rolf Tiedemann, Gretel Adorno, Susan Buck-Morss and Klaus Schultz (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970-1986), p. 422.

to their neglected self, and therefore encourages them to rebel as individuals in an increasingly collective world.

Adorno also disagrees with Benjamin and contends that most twentieth-century works of art have an 'auratic' quality, natural or artificial. Schoenberg's naturally auratic works empower the listener. His works' essence emerges from his angst-ridden self laid bare. His authority comes from the legacy of other humanitarian artists such as Beethoven and Goethe. Like Kraus or Picasso, Schoenberg's authenticity emerges from his unique technical language.

While Adorno concurs with Benjamin (and indeed Freud), that it is 'shock' which is able to awaken the dissociated individual, contra Benjamin, he argues that salient avant-garde art shocks the individual.

In responding to the two questions proposed: what necessity inherent in the composition forced these musics into their particular styles? and, what is the relationship between the stylistic ideal to the material of the composition and its structural totality? Adorno shows at the literal level that Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique 'sterilises' music. It removes music from its historical obligation to its bourgeois legacy, now reified by economic rationalism and production values. Adorno shows that Schoenberg's music possesses those shocking qualities (like Benjamin's conception of the film) that awaken listeners from their tribal, alienated state within false communities and grounds them in their own subjectivity. "Anxiety, Schoenberg's expressive core, identifies itself with the terror of men in the agonies of death under total domination."¹²⁹

The posture of Schoenberg, who reshaped music purely out of itself, without mundane considerations, was viewed as the fruit of

¹²⁹ *Prisms*, p. 172.

unleashed speculative subjectivism . . . he not only shocked audiences, he overtaxed them.¹³⁰

While he agrees with Benjamin that avant-garde art must liquidate the aura of bourgeois music, Adorno argues that cultural bureaucracies have mastered messages of kitsch culture to the point where they can manufacture aura. In Germany, during Hitler's Third Reich, the *Kultur* bureau attached nationalistic ideologies to the music of Bach and Beethoven:

One can clearly distinguish between the names to which the Nazis paid lip-service, such as Goethe and Beethoven, and others who represent ideas which are the life-blood of the fascist movement.¹³¹

Adorno relies upon Lukacs to assess the loss of humanity in the age of mechanical reproduction.

Lukacs argues that in industrial society, the reduction of quality to quantity, from use value to exchange value, produces the phenomenon of reification, the transformation of the living into the dead: "the real motor forces of history are independent of man's psychological consciousness."¹³² Economic rationalism and exchange value influence how we perceive all facets of society. Because economic bureaucracies use closed scientific and philosophical systems to organise our society, bureaucracies fail to grasp the social materials of humanity. In economics, sciences, politics and other spheres, ruling institutions

¹³⁰ Theodor W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* (1962), trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Seabury, 1976), p. 173.

¹³¹ National Socialism, p. 422.

¹³² *History of Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Merlin Press, 1971), p. 47.

customarily organise people through systems. They are treated as cogs in an economic machine. Economic gain is the primary concern of industrial society without consideration for humanity. The 'inhumanity' of institutions, governments and their systems, as a consequence, distort human consciousness:

Just as the capitalist system continuously produces and reproduces itself economically on higher and higher levels, the structure of reification progressively sinks more deeply, more fatefully and more definitely into the consciousness of man.¹³³

Lukacs believes that perceiving the world primarily through scientific and rational modes of thought reifies human behaviour. Ironically, an economically based, rational society contributes to the relative irrationality of the whole. Economic rationalism forces individuals to ignore their natural - irrational, unconscious, subjective - qualities.

Lukacs defines rationalism as the striving to make the world predictable, for predicting human behaviour is essential in successful economic endeavours. The insistence on the concrete emphasises the tangible at the expense of the intangible. By making the world predictable, monopolies can then control and dominate the individual's internal and external nature:

... men are constantly smashing, replacing, and leaving behind them the 'natural', irrational and actually existing bonds, while on the other hand, they erect around themselves in the reality they

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

have created and 'made', a kind of second nature which evolves with exactly the same inexorable necessity as was the case earlier on with irrational forces of nature . . .¹³⁴

Lukacs agrees with Hegel that the specialised rational systems of today are the outcome of an evolutionary trend towards a domination of nature. But whereas in Hegel's philosophy this leads to an understanding of God through human knowledge, in Lukacs' philosophy this also leads to the end of an organic or 'natural' production. Socio-psychological insights, for example, make achieving 'total market penetration' more attainable in advertising and political campaigns.

Lukacs states that in modern society, the domination of nature includes the domination of human nature. He contends that not only are the inner and outer impulses of the individual dominated, but as well, the very rational, empirical, and closed philosophical systems used to dominate come to form and characterise our perception of the world. This causes a suppression of one's *a priori*, abstract and irrational impulses and one's need to conform within the social totality.

The increasing social totality stems from the collective greed of industrialism because capitalism is built upon a domination of nature for profit. Lukacs defines totality as the "domination of the whole over its parts."¹³⁵ Through the increasing subordination of humans to time allotted for rest and work, "time sheds its qualities, variable, flowing nature; it freezes into an exactly delimited, quantifiable continuum filled with quantifiable 'things'." ¹³⁶

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 123. By second nature, Lukacs means a scientific view of the world that suppresses 'unscientific' phenomena.

¹³⁵ *History*, p. 27.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

Institutions desensitise consciousness. They mechanise internal and external nature; most individuals, one way or another, succumb to their fate as part of production lines. Lukacs argues that today, the significance of most actions cannot be assessed except in relation to the influence of economic rationalism.¹³⁷ Economic dynamics influence the actions of most individuals and institutions.

Like Benjamin, Lukacs believed that abstract art was just another product of the bourgeois. As in discourse (see Chapter Two), Lukacs insisted on a clear artistic language. He states concerning the Expressionists:

For the most part their convictions were sincerely held, though they were mostly immature and confused . . . They were profoundly influenced by every conceivable reactionary prejudice of the age, and this made them all the more susceptible to the widest possible range of anti-revolutionary slogans - abstract pacifism, ideology of non-violence, abstract critiques of the bourgeoisie, or all sorts of crazy anarchist notions . . .¹³⁸

Lukacs saw objective realism as the only form of 'true' art:

[The] . . . true realist demonstrates the importance of the overall social context and the insistence on all-round knowledge required to do it justice. The profundity of the great realist, the extent and the endurance of his success, depends in great measure on how

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

¹³⁸ "Realism in Balance," in *Aesthetics and Politics*, ed. Ronald Taylor (London: NLB, 1977), p. 51.

clearly he perceives - as a creative writer - the true significance of whatever phenomenon he depicts.¹³⁹

Realism and immediacy capture 'otherness' of the artist and his time, yet real, immediate art is accessible to all. Avant-garde art is obscure and fetishistic. In Hegelian terms, Lukacs believed that the subjectivity of avant-garde art had gone too far and had broken away from the *Zeitgeist*.

Throughout the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno wrestles with the views of Benjamin and Lukacs on modern art. With indirect reference to his colleagues, Adorno states that avant-garde art puts itself "towards the driven-out darkness and helps to enlighten by consciously transferring the illumination of the world into its own darkness."¹⁴⁰ Adorno explains why Schoenberg composes in the manner that he does:

. . . the obscure driving force within him is nourished by the certainty that nothing in art is binding except that which can be totally filled by the historical state of consciousness which determines its own substance - from its 'experience' in the emphatic sense.¹⁴¹

In other words, his music crystallises contemporary experiences in the Hegelian sense, against the inhumanity of the social totality. Symbolically, whereas immediate art dwells mostly on the surface and

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹⁴⁰ . . . jenes verdrängten Dunklen entgegen und hilft zur Erhellung einzig noch, indem sie die Helligkeit der Welt bewußt ihrer eigenen Finsternis überführt, p.24

¹⁴¹ Sein dunkler Drang lebt von der Gewißheit, daß nichts an Kunst verbindlich gerät, als was vom historischen Stande des Bewußtseins, der dessen eigene Substanz ausmacht, von seiner "Erfahrung" im emphatischen Sinn, ganz gefüllt werden kann, p.193

acts as a form of censorship, avant-garde art explores the subjective, irrational, unconscious, and the repressed.

Using Stravinsky's music as an example, Adorno criticises Lukacs' view of artistic realism in a similar manner as he criticises Lukacs' view of rational language. According to Adorno, artistic realism and rational language today are instruments of administrations used to undermine and oppress the proletariat:

[Stravinsky's] language is as little removed from the communicative as it is from the joke: non-serious itself, play, from which the subject remains outside; the denial of the aesthetic 'unfolding of the truth' considers itself the guarantee of authenticity and therewith of truth as well.¹⁴²

While he opposes Lukacs' views on kitsch and avant-garde art, Adorno relies extensively on Lukacs' definitions of reification, rationalism and totality.

Adorno claims that reification in music is the stasis of musical style. In Nazi Germany, not only did neotraditional music reify the collective experience, but it also reified political ideologies. It reinforced elitist racial, cultural and social beliefs among insiders.

Through time, kitsch music, symbolically kitsch art, contributed to German totalitarian society. Through reflexive interaction between producer and consumer, the system grew stronger. It, in turn,

¹⁴² Seine Sprache entfernt darum so wenig sich von der kommunikativen wie vom Jux: Unernst selber, Spiel, aus dem das Subjekt sich draußen hält, Absage an die ästhetische "Entfaltung der Wahrheit" nimmt sich für den Garanten des Authentischen als des Wahren, p. 195.

marginalised those not encompassed by the system. It silenced the voice of true art.

In post-W.W.II democratic society, similar trends prevail. In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno draws parallels between the power of the Nazis over their citizens, and the power of the American culture industry over its patrons:

Real life is becoming indistinguishable from the movies. The sound film, far surpassing the theatre of illusion, leaves no room for imagination or reflection on the part of the audience . . . [Films] are designed so that quickness, powers of observation, and experience are undeniably needed . . . yet sustained thought is out of the question if the spectator is not to miss the relentless rush of facts . . . The culture industry as a whole has moulded men as a type of [*sic*] unfailingly reproduced in every respect.¹⁴³

Through irrational, chaotic, subjective qualities, avant-garde artists offer to the individual an alternative to 'fascist' art. Their art rebels against inhumane monopoly and state capitalism. Whereas fascist artists dominate human nature for financial profit and social status, true avant-garde artists free art from its coopted state.

Thus, Adorno transforms Lukacs' conceptions of rationalism, reification and the social totality in his discussion of kitsch and avant-garde art.

In his defence of avant-garde art, Adorno also relies on insights perceived by Le Bon, Freud, and Jung. Le Bon's ideas on group behaviour figures prominently when he discusses the impact of fascist

¹⁴³ P. 127.

culture on World-War II and post-World-War II Western societies. In the next section I introduce the ideas of Le Bon, the Frankfurt scholar incorporates.

II

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Le Bon and the psychology of the crowd—The crowd and authority—Adorno and the Le Bonian German collective—A Jungian definition of archetypes and the collective unconscious—Archetypes in the works of Stravinsky and Schoenberg—Freud's analysis of Leonardo da Vinci through his life and works—Freudian sado-masochism and the collective—Adorno's Freudian perspective on the dialectics of fascism, sado-masochism and collective behaviour—Schizophrenic behaviour and paganism in Stravinsky's Rite of Spring

Le Bon (1934) contends that distinctive personality traits of an individual are suppressed in a group setting: "The sentiments and ideas of all the persons in the gathering take one and the same direction, and their conscious personality vanishes."¹⁴⁴

As Freud (1934) says in his commentary on Le Bon's analysis:

The racial unconscious emerges; what is heterogeneous is submerged in what is homogeneous. As we should say, the mental superstructure, the development of which individuals show such dissimilarities, is removed, and the unconscious foundations, which are similar in everyone, stand exposed to view.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Excerpts from *The Crowd*, in *The Psychology of Society*, ed. Richard Sennet (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), p. 50.

¹⁴⁵ Excerpts from "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego," in *The Psychology of Society*, ed. Richard Sennet (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), p. 59.

The individual abandons repressions in a crowd. Instincts of invincible power replace personal self-esteem; he becomes anonymous and all that is 'evil' in the human mind is available to be tapped. "Isolated, he may be a cultured individual; in a crowd, he is a barbarian - that is a creature acting by instinct."¹⁴⁶ Unconscious qualities obtain the upper hand. As part of the collective, the intellectual aptitude of the individual is weakened.

As soon as living beings, animals or human beings become a group, they assume an infantile state. Le Bon claims that they thirst for obedience:

Under the influence of suggestion, he will undertake the accomplishment of certain acts with irresistible impetuosity. This impetuosity is the more irresistible in the case of crowds than in that of the hypnotised subject, for the fact that, the suggestion being at the same for all individuals of the crowd, it gains strength by reciprocity.¹⁴⁷

The group cannot operate without a master. "Abandoned to themselves, they soon weary of disorder, and instinctively turn to servitude."¹⁴⁸ Their master, however, must possess strong and imposing qualities that keep the group in continual fascination.

The leader must possess a mysterious and irresistible power, a certain prestige. Freud defines Le Bon's concept of prestige in the following manner: "Prestige is a sort of domination exercised over us by

¹⁴⁶ P. 53.

¹⁴⁷ P. 53.

¹⁴⁸ P p: 52.

an individual, a work or an idea. It entirely paralyses our critical faculty, and fills us with wonderment and respect."¹⁴⁹

Le Bon distinguishes between acquired and personal prestige. Acquired prestige is attached to persons in virtue of their name, fortune and/or reputation. In contrast, personal prestige has the effect of making everyone obey them as though by the operation of some magnetic magic:

Doubtless a crowd is often criminal, but also it is often heroic. The type of hero dear to crowds will always have the semblance of a Caesar. His insignia attract them, his authority overawes them, and his sword instils them with fear. A crowd is always ready to revolt against a feeble and to bow down servilely before a strong authority.¹⁵⁰

In the crowd, individuals sacrifice personal beliefs for the collective interest particularly since the feelings of invincibility and anonymity allow for the possibility of unconscious impulses to be enacted.

Under the direction of a prestigious leader, crowds also become "slaves of the impulses they receive."¹⁵¹ But crowds also produce heroes:

It is crowds rather than isolated individuals that may be induced to run the risk of death to secure the triumph of a creed or an idea, that may be fired with enthusiasm for glory and honour, that are led on - almost without bread and without arms, as in the age of

¹⁴⁹ *Group Psychology*, p. 36. An interesting analogue to the study by Adorno is Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore's examination of television media and its ability to fill us with 'wonderment and respect'. See *The Medium is the Massage* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967).

¹⁵⁰ P. 51.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

the Crusades - to deliver the tomb of Christ from the infidel, as in [18]93, to defend the fatherland [*sic*].¹⁵²

In the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno uses Le Bon's conception of group behaviour to analyse 'tribal' behaviour in the *Third Reich*. He relies extensively on Le Bon's characterisation of the crowd and its susceptibility to authority.

The Frankfurt scholar claims that what 'crimes' fascists won't commit as individuals, they will as a group, against others and against themselves. Through Stravinsky's music, Adorno claims that official culture transforms its audiences into mobs. "His trick, self-preservation through self-annihilation, falls into the behaviourist scheme of the total incorporation of mankind."¹⁵³ While in an isolated situation the individual may be less inclined to react with such (self) hatred, within the group, they revel in their (self) destruction. They can act out unconscious, even nihilistic impulses without restraint.

Fascist culture is inherently hierarchical. It gives the 'privileged' and the insider a false sense of belonging and meaning.¹⁵⁴ Inherent in such groups is a reliance on authority: the dynamics of social order carries with it the necessity of authoritarian figures. They grant power to those whom they deem as 'honourable'. Stravinsky, but also other proto-

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

¹⁵³ Sein Trick, Selbsterhaltung durch Selbstauslöschung, fällt ins behavioristische Schema der total eingegliederten Menschheit, p. 179.

¹⁵⁴ As a member of Hitler's Youth, Horst Schmid discusses this sense of belonging within the Third Reich:

... the child-like urge to play, the adventure of scouting, camaraderie, pleasure to sing and march, and finally, the feeling of being a part of Germany's new future, all this probably motivated most of us to be a part of the *Jungvolk* [a section of Hitler's Youth for 10 - 13 year olds].

See Schmid's autobiographical work, *Jahrgang '29* (Stuttgart: SVG Spezialzeitschriften-Verlag, 1994), p. 72. Citation translated by Alix Schmid-Weigold.

fascists, gain prestige through submission. They gain prestige, in part, because they promote homogenous, tribal behaviour and because they are backed by authorities before whom the masses are trained to cower.

In contrast, salient avant-garde art shatters mob-like behaviour. By deciphering the fragmented avant-garde work, the individual begins to aver themselves socially. In ideal circumstances, through exposure to their subjective, individualistic impulses, the individual becomes aware of the masochistic nature of autocratic behaviour. S/he becomes less susceptible to acting in an auto-suggestive manner as would a member of a crowd:

The human being who lets himself float in the crying, in a music which isn't equal to him in any respect, lets at the same time, the stream float back into he 'who isn't himself', and allows for that which was dammed up behind the dam of the world of things.¹⁵⁵

Adorno also relies upon the concepts of Freud and Jung to discuss group behaviour. First, I outline Jung's concepts.

In his book, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*,¹⁵⁶ Jung (1934) defines the formal and empty nature of the archetype: "A primordial image is determined as to its content only when it has become conscious and is therefore filled out with the material of conscious experience."¹⁵⁷ Archetypes are recurring psychological motifs that are

¹⁵⁵ Der Mensch, der sich verströmen läßt im Weinen und einer Musik, die in nichts mehr ihm gleich ist, läßt zugleich den Strom dessen in sich zurückfluten, was nicht er selber ist und was hinter dem Damm der Dingwelt gestaut war, p. 122.

¹⁵⁶ Extracts of this work are presented in C. G. Jung's *Four Archetypes: Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, Trickster*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 1976.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

common to all. They include the mother, the father and objects such as toys or music. Wendy Zerlin defines the "archetype" as:

A Jungian term for any of a number of prototypical phenomena (e.g. the wise old man, the great mother) which form the content of the collective unconscious . . . and which are assumed to reflect universal human thought found in all cultures.¹⁵⁸

Jung contends that "like every animal, humans possess a preformed psyche which breeds true to his species and upon closer examination, reveals distinct features traceable to antecedents."¹⁵⁹ These images are "familiar to whole species and come into being in every child anew."¹⁶⁰

Often in fantasy, primeval images are made visible, "and it is here that the concept of the archetype finds its specific application."¹⁶¹ Archetypes can be latent and "can re-arise spontaneously, at any time, at any place, and without any outside influence."¹⁶²

Adorno claims that Stravinsky's music recalls tribal attitudes and infantile behaviour. His compositions surrounding World-War One create a collective fantasy, 'through the production of a strictly hermetic inner scene of pre-individualistic experiences common to all'.¹⁶³ This collective fantasy goes against the conscious ego.

Visually and musically, his early works use archetypes associated with childhood: magicians, dancing bears and circuses. Children's songs,

¹⁵⁸ In the *Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, eds. Alan Bullock, R. B. Woodings and John Cumming (London: Collins, 1990), p. 48.

¹⁵⁹ *Four Archetypes*, p. 12.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁶³ . . . die Herstellung eines gewissermaßen gegen das bewußte Ich streng abgedichteten inneren Schauplatzes präindividueller, allen gemeinsamer . . . Erfahrungen . . ., p.150.

idiotic drum rolls and blaring trumpets infiltrate the collective psyche to appeal to the child in every adult.

By awakening pre-individualistic states, fascist ideas in works such as *Petrouchka* and *The Rite of Spring* achieved more impact. Stravinsky drew:

... a retrogressive connection line between the masks and hollow sculptures, and the 'absolute' musical ideal of German academicism. The short-circuit which led from the aesthetics of Apollinaire and Cocteau to the popular music movement and the youth music movement ... ¹⁶⁴

Using Stravinsky's music as a symbol, Adorno claims that the Nazis appealed to the collective child through various means. They created a 'theatrical' child-like world of magical heroes and paternal leaders, banners, costumes, and parades. These images, used to elicit pre-infantilistic responses, gave many Germans a sense of belonging to the family. The theatrical, unrealistic social design was intended to make absolute self-sacrifice for the magical fascist leaders a virtue. In Germany, autocratic behaviour eventually led to the loss of the self to the state, and the dissociated social disposition necessary for society to commit acts of sadism against others and masochism against themselves, in a spirit of externalised self-hatred and self-denial.

In a similar manner that he uses Stravinsky's music to discuss fascist culture, Adorno uses Schoenberg's works to discuss aesthetic

¹⁶⁴ ... eine rückwärtige Verbindungslinie zwischen den Masken und Hohlplastiken und dem "absoluten" Musikideal des deutschen Akademismus gezogen. Der Kurzschluß, der von der Ästhetik Apollinaires und Cocteaus zur Volks und Jugendmusikbewegung ... führte ..., p.169.

resistance to fascist culture. Adorno claims that Expressionist artists such as Kirchner, Beckmann, Kraus, Schiele, Pechstein, *et al.*, carried on the humanitarian tradition. Their 'primitive' art returned Germans to the instinctual. They uncovered prevalent issues such as loneliness, the loss of experience and sensuality in the mechanical age.

Adorno also provides some very general insights into why certain artists choose to perpetuate the avant-garde and kitsch legacies. For this he relies upon his caricatures of Schoenberg and Stravinsky. He also relies on Freud's study on Leonardo da Vinci as a model. I introduce aspects of Freud's study, then show how Adorno adopts a similar approach in his assessment of the two composers.

Freud perceived that pathologies could be projected onto objects of art in the same manner that sexuality is crystallised in phallic objects. Artistic objects sometimes transform one's experiences into symbols. In his only essay on art, *Eine Kindheitserinnerung des Leonardo da Vinci*, Freud (1910) analyses Leonardo da Vinci's personality through an examination of his life and works.¹⁶⁵ Freud justifies his approach: "The psychoanalytic enquiry consists of the data of a person's life history: on the one hand the chance circumstances of events and background influences, and on the other hand the subject's reported reactions."¹⁶⁶

Freud also states:

Supported by its knowledge of psychical mechanisms [the study] then endeavours to establish a dynamic basis for his nature on the strength of his reactions, and to disclose the original motive forces

¹⁶⁵ *Leonardo Da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*, trans. Alan Tyson (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1963).

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

of his mind, as well as their later transformations and developments.¹⁶⁷

Freud suggests that the creation and manner in which an artistic object is received and interpreted reveals the psychological state of the patron. At best, art appreciation can be therapeutic when it awakens the observer to the cause of their own anxieties. At worst, it can reinforce pathological behaviour. Art works crystallise aspects of the artist's personality.

Using Freud's theories as a basis, Adorno claims that Schoenberg is a humanitarian, a mature individual who, despite retribution from fascist bureaucracies, continues to create music for enlightenment purposes:

He sacrifices the illusion of authenticity treating it as incompatible with the state of that consciousness which was driven so far towards individuation by the liberal order, to the point that this consciousness negates the order which had advanced it thus far.¹⁶⁸

Despite resistance, Schoenberg writes music that is true to his instinctual, creative convictions. The immanent signs of his dodecaphonic music project the composer's dream of a utopian society.

In contrast, Stravinsky's reliance on the pre-established reveals the composer's fear of his own individuality. While he often satirises the musical models he copies, he nevertheless cowers before authority like a mildly rebellious child. Adorno declares that Stravinsky is an authoritarian personality:

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

¹⁶⁸ Er opfert den Schein von Authentizität als unvereinbar mit dem Stand jenes Bewußtseins, das von der liberalen Ordnung so weit zur Individuation vorgetrieben ward, bis es die Ordnung negiert, die es dahin brachte, p.193

According to psychology, the authoritarian personality reacts ambivalently towards authority. Stravinsky's music 'thumbs its nose' at the music of our fathers. This ambivalence is so powerful that it itself always comes through again and again; during the neo-classic phase, this ambivalence is posed in the unbroken affirmation of authority.¹⁶⁹

Wendy Zerin defines the authoritarian personality in the following manner:

A personality type characterised by extreme obedience and unquestioning respect for authority. These defining characteristics are usually accompanied by rigidity, conventionality, prejudice, and intolerance of weakness or ambiguity.¹⁷⁰

Although he does not state this directly, Adorno suggests that Stravinsky is a sado-masochist.

Ultimately, however, whether his portrayal of Stravinsky or even Schoenberg is psychologically sound is of little importance to Adorno. At the symbolic level, his depiction of Stravinsky and Schoenberg are meant to shed light into the motivations of those artists who wrote for the Nazis, and those who opposed them. Stravinsky's music is treated as an example of Nazi propaganda art, and he as an esteemed employee of

¹⁶⁹ Der Psychologie zufolge verhält sich der "autoritäre Charakter" ambivalent der Autorität gegenüber. So dreht Strawinskys Musik der unserer Väter eine Nase. So stark ist die Ambivalenz, daß sie selbst während der neoklassischen Phase, in der ungebrochene Bejahung von Autorität posiert wird, immer wieder durchkommt, p. 168.

¹⁷⁰ "Authoritarian Personality," in the *Fontana Dictionary of Modern Thought*, eds. Alan Bullock, R. B. Woodings and John Cumming (London: Collins, 1990), p. 60.

the Nazis. His neotraditional works especially, like fascist culture itself, reveal an allegiance to authority, and act as a means for authorities to control the proletariat. It is fascist culture that is 'sado-masochistic'. To understand why Adorno considers Nazi culture to be so, it is first necessary to outline the Freudian manner in which Adorno uses the term.

Freud's conception of libido (which he later called 'life instinct') is characterised by actions an individual or a society takes to ensure survival. Aggressive libidinal impulses are sometimes pathological when the (collective) subject takes violent action to protect himself from being injured or destroyed by his enemies. In an extreme materialisation of this behaviour, "the id becomes transferred into the ego, into an aggression against enemies in the external world."¹⁷¹ Another form of libidinal behaviour occurs when sons attempt to protect their parents.

Freud suggests that the traditional family is connected by latent sexual dynamics. The son is attracted to his mother (Oedipus Complex) and to his father in a homo-erotic way, and vicariously, through the father's sexual interest in the mother. Should a parent be threatened, the actions the son takes to protect them may take on latent sexual dynamics.

Freud uses the model of the family as the basis for his assessment of group dynamics between leaders and crowds. The relationship between parents and child mirrors the relationship between the powerful leader and the group. The latter may take on a sado-masochistic character.

Repressed sexual attraction for the father may result in a deep sense of guilt. Wanting the father's authority, power and love, and the

¹⁷¹ *A Primer of Freudian Psychology*, ed. Calvin S. Hall (New York: New American Library, 1954), p.60.

mother's love exclusively may result in feelings of guilt. Guilt that seeks punishment stems from the 'omnipotent father', the male figure that knows the child's most 'perverse' desires of which the super-ego sometimes acts as this internal authority, an 'omnipotent father'. The renunciation of instinctual satisfaction is the source of guilt.

Guilt arises out of fear of the father. The super-ego sometimes, "presses for punishment, since the continuance of the forbidden wishes cannot be concealed from the super-ego."¹⁷² Guilt internalised may result in a desire for punishment - masochistic fulfilment. Guilt externalised may result in projected self-hatred - sadistic fulfilment. Freud believed that those who practised sadism also harboured masochistic tendencies, and vice-versa. "The most remarkable feature of this perversion is that its active and passive forms are habitually found to occur together in the same individual."¹⁷³

In, "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda," Adorno (1951) argues that Hitler adopted the role of the protective father to a generation of lost Germans: "Hitler shunned the traditional role of the loving father and replaced it entirely by the negative one of the threatening authority."¹⁷⁴ Hitler, the father figure, ordered his followers to protect the nurturing mother(land) - Germany:

The concept of love was relegated to the abstract notion of Germany and seldom mentioned without the epithet of "fanatical".
 . . It is one of the basic tenets of fascist leadership to keep primary

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁷³ *On Sexuality: Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and other Works* (London: Penguin, 1977), p. 73.

¹⁷⁴ *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, eds. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Urizen Books, 1978), p. 123.

libidinal energy on an unconscious level so as to divert its manifestations in a way suitable to political ends.¹⁷⁵

Stravinsky's music is discussed figuratively. In the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno states that Stravinsky, historically a supporter of Mussolini, Franco, submits artistically, masochistically, before parental, fascist authorities: "The sado-masochistic element accompanies Stravinsky's music in all its phases."¹⁷⁶

During the Third Reich, even fashion culture was used to eroticise the sado-masochistic nature of state authority. As Susan Sontag writes concerning the dress of the SS and its sadistic signs: "There is a general fantasy about [SS] uniforms. They suggest community, order, identity, competence, legitimate authority, the legitimate exercise of violence."¹⁷⁷ Sontag asks herself why the SS uniform is so popular in campy, sado-masochistic pulp fiction. She responds:

. . . because the SS was the ideal incarnation of fascism's overt assertion of the righteousness of violence, the right to have total power over others and to treat them as absolutely inferior. . . . The SS was designed as an elite military community that would be not only supremely violent but also supremely beautiful.¹⁷⁸

Despite the *Kultur* bureau's fixation on sexuality, power, and beauty, as Horst Schmid (1991) notes, a constricting moral code was exercised.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

¹⁷⁶ Der sado-masochistische Zug begleitet Strawinskys Musik durch alle ihre Phasen, p. 147.

¹⁷⁷ "Fascinating Fascism," in *The Nazification of Art*, eds. Brandon Taylor and Wilfried van der Will (Winchester: Winchester Press, 1990), p. 215.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 215.

Repressive sexual codes added to latent sexual and libidinal frustration. In Adorno's view, the unfulfilled desires for power over one's destiny and sexual gratification were turned into hostility against others and 'otherness', "through which even this love [for authority and country] attained a ring of hostility and aggressiveness against those not encompassed by it."¹⁷⁹

Through his metaphor of Stravinsky's life and works, Adorno claims that fascist artists are sadists because they revel in and endorse deplorable actions against the proletariat. They contribute to the loss of humanity. They provide appropriate dissociated, schizophrenic responses among citizens to cope with the war-time traumas:¹⁸⁰ "This musical infantilism belongs to a movement that designed schizophrenic

¹⁷⁹ Freudian Theory, p. 123.

¹⁸⁰ Adorno sometimes refers to schizophrenic behaviour in his discussion in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*. Henderson and Gillespie categorise schizophrenia into three basic subcategories: paranoid, hebephrenic, and catatonic. Catatonia and hebephrenia share certain qualities. "The most prominent symptom is the failure of affect, or emotionally blunting, showing itself in apathy and indifference," p. 311. Generally, schizophrenic patients may express, experience, or conduct, without any show of emotion, events "that would cause a rational individual great remorse," p. 311. Like in Le Bon's depiction of the auto-suggestive crowd member, the schizophrenic's emotional deterioration leads to "a state where the individual is quite suggestible and is easily influenced by others," p. 312. Henderson and Gillespie note that if such a person ceases to keep in contact with reality, the necessity for inhibition is removed. Modes of expression which are, from the social point of view, primal and not permissible, can then come into action: "Regression can occur, and tendencies hitherto unconscious, because inhibited, receive unconscious expression," p. 311. Without regard for social or moral constraints, a schizophrenic individual can commit acts of violence without remorse. Henderson and Gillespie contend that hebephrenics display "great incoherence in the train of thought, marked emotional disturbance, periods of wild excitement alternating with periods of tearfulness and depression, and frequently with illusions . . .," p. 322; Catatonic behaviour starts first with apathy, a lack of concentration, graduates to mutism, until the patient may 'freeze' in one position, or they may repeat a particular movement incessantly. As Henderson and Gillespie explain, "catatonics understand perfectly clearly everything that is going on around them, but may resist strongly. On the other hand, they may obey everything automatically," p., 329. Adorno blurs the distinction between mild forms of schizophrenia and mob-like behaviour. Schizophrenics and mobs are both 'easily suggestible', both may act indifferently to what a rational person may consider atrocious; Both may act out unconscious, hostile desires that under rational circumstances they would be less inclined to undertake. By tying Stravinsky's music to that of culture bureaucracies, Adorno claims that kitsch culture promotes schizophrenic behaviour. See D. K. Henderson and R. D. Gillespie's *Textbook of Psychiatry for Students and Practitioners*, 8th, ed. (London: Oxford, 1956).

models as a mimetic defence against the insanity of war."¹⁸¹ Fascist art dissociates audiences from social anxieties. It instructs those "who do not want to come under the wheels"¹⁸² how to respond emotionally.

Using *The Rite of Spring* and *Petrouchka* as a means to discuss fascist ideology, Adorno claims conservative culture glorifies self-mockery and self-annihilation. *The Rite of Spring* emphasises trance-like, rhythmic-spatial categories rather than the expressive-dynamic categories. Adorno clarifies the meaning between the two:

... the expressive-dynamic ... listening type ... has its origin in singing; it aims at the fulfilling of coping with time, and in its highest manifestations, [the expressive dynamic] transforms the heterogeneous course of time into the power of the musical process. [The rhythmic spatial category] obeys the beat of the drum. It is intent upon the articulation of time through the division into equal measures which time virtually cancels and spatialises.¹⁸³

In other words, as organs of European fascists, kitsch artists provide their authorities with motor-reflex art - direct art - that recreates appropriate schizophrenic, emotional reactions to accompany atrocious acts. These works cover-up inhumanity in an increasingly barbaric world.

¹⁸¹Der musikalische Infantilismus gehört einer Bewegung an, die als mimetische Abwehr des Kriegswahnsinns allenthalben schizophrene Modelle entwarf, p.155.

¹⁸²... so wie diese Musik soll reagieren, wer nicht unter die Räder kommen will, p.177.

¹⁸³... der expressiv-dynamische ... Hörtyp ... hat seinen Ursprung im Singen, ist aufs erfüllende Bewältigen der Zeit gerichtet und wendet in seinen höchsten Manifestationen den heterogenen Zeitverlauf zur Kraft des musikalischen Prozesses um. Der andere Typ (rhythmisch-räumlich) gehorcht dem Schlag der Trommel. Er ist bedacht auf die Artikulation der Zeit durch Aufteilung in gleiche Maße, welche die Zeit virtuell außer Kraft setzen und verräumlichen, p. 180.

In contrast, with their "style of freedom," true avant-garde artists create, in a sense, therapeutic art, works that configure to rebel against the pathological aspects of sado-masochistic behaviour during the rise of fascism. Schoenberg's music, for example, "breaks through the fictive psychological substratum - through the Wagnerian hero-erotic image of man."¹⁸⁴ Angst-ridden and experiential avant-garde art rebels against the sadistic and authoritative tendencies of official fascist culture.

In the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno also draws on Freud's theories of the collective 'individual' in late capitalist societies: as one without a strong parental influence. Without the 'natural' authoritative polemic of the nurturing mother and authoritative father, members of the *Kultur* bureau (today, movies stars, and sports figures)¹⁸⁵ become archetypal parental figures for the masses.

In an age in which psychological manipulation abounds, Adorno treats awareness of the methods of fascist authorities as crucial to the survival of the humanitarian legacy in art and society. Whereas the economic bias of traditional Marxism identified labour and production as the basis of human freedom, Adorno identifies psychological freedom and sensual pleasure of the individual as the locus of human freedom. As Adorno states, "Marx had wanted to turn the world into a giant workhouse."¹⁸⁶

To combat the psycho-technological cultural barrage in capitalist society, radical subversive art becomes a crucial mode of resistance and defiance. Ideally, radical art reveals to us our artificial inclusion into an

¹⁸⁴ "On the Social Situation of Music," (1932) trans. Wesley Blomster, *Telos*, 35 (Spring 1978), 129.

¹⁸⁵ Marshall McLuhan and Wilfred Watson discuss this in their book *From Cliché to Archetype* (New York: Viking Press, 1970); See as well, *Television: The Critical Media*, ed. Horace Newcomb (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

¹⁸⁶ Cited in Jay's *Adorno*, p. 86.

administered collective world. It exposes our passive subscription to modes of behaviour dictated by state and monopoly capitalists.

Instead of compromising art for profit and prestige, true avant-garde artists create works that carry on the humanitarian legacy established by the likes of Bach, Beethoven, Goethe, and Kraus, regardless of profit and prestige.

Therefore, while Adorno relies upon Freud, Jung, and Le Bon to evaluate the psychological qualities of modern music-making, underlying his critique are personal concerns intimately linked to his experiences as an escapee of the Nazi regime. The Frankfurt scholar relies upon Nietzsche's depiction of Wagner as an anti-Semite and a proto-fascist as a model to criticise the symbolic Stravinsky.

III

NIETZSCHE, WAGNER, AND THE OVERMAN

Nietzsche and Wagner—Adorno and Stravinsky—Adorno versus Nietzsche: responsible versus irresponsible art

In his book, *The Case of Wagner* (1888), Nietzsche refers to Wagner as a fainthearted follower of Schopenhauer, a 'ventriloquist of God', who when faced with rejection, succumbed to social pressures and gave in to the other swine, loosely meaning German conservatives. As Walter Kaufmann notes, "No other German writer of comparable stature has been more of an extreme critique of German nationalism than Nietzsche."¹⁸⁷ Nietzsche writes:

The Germans are by far the worst experience of my life . . . What respect can I have for the Germans when even my friends cannot discriminate between me and a liar like Richard Wagner? In one extreme case, one even straddles the fence between me and anti-Semitic canaille.¹⁸⁸

Nietzsche believed that Germany (1880s) was threatened by many afraid of social, intellectual and cultural 'progress'. Long before the two world-wars he foresaw a social legacy of susceptibility to dreams of conservative nationalism, security and power:

¹⁸⁷ *Genealogy*, p. 41.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 342.

I do not like the latest speculators in idealism, the anti-Semites, who today roll their eyes in a Christian-Aryan bourgeois manner and exhaust one's patience by trying to rouse up all the horned-beast elements in the people by a brazen abuse of the cheapest of all agitators, tricks of moral attitudinising.¹⁸⁹

Conservative Germans of his time appeared to be masochists on the one hand, giving in to sadistic, conservative leaders, and sadists on the other hand, projecting their self-hate onto those they envied, particularly the Jews:

... that no swindle fails to succeed in Germany today is connected with the undeniable and palpable element of the 'German spirit', and the cause of that I seek in a too exclusive diet of newspapers, politics, beer, and Wagnerian music, together with the presupposition of such a diet: first, national constriction and vanity ... [It results in] the strong but narrow principle, '*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*', and then the *paralysis agitans* [palsy] of modern ideas."¹⁹⁰

He believed that Christianity was an opiate of the masses, and the belief in fate over reason undermined knowledge, well-being and peace. Nietzsche despised the conservatives' fear of modernism, and reliance on morality, and argued that knowledge comes from self-asseveration. If we don't use our own will and sobriety to find truth, we castrate our intellects. As Nietzsche writes:

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 158-159.

Terrible wildness, abject sorrow, emptiness, the shudder of joy, unexpectedness - in short all the qualities peculiar to the Semitic race! I believe that the Jews approach Wagner's art with more understanding than the Aryans do . . . We must strive to oppose the false after-effects of Wagner's art.¹⁹¹

Nietzsche was a supporter of progressivism, and - in a sense - by extension, radical Jewish thought in the German Empire. With implicit reference to Wilhelm and perhaps even prophetic of Hitler, and the culture industry, Nietzsche argued that those who believe in themselves and have the means to propagate themselves can wield great influence over the weak.

He portrayed German conservatives as a hostile collective that could destroy the individualist: "The weakest of men spells disaster for the [truly] strong."¹⁹² According to Nietzsche, Wagner was a weak individual who compromises art for financial gain, social acceptance and recognition.

Wagner's pseudo-religious works, *Ring der Nibelungen* and *Parsifal* prey upon the weaknesses of the conservative German psyche. Wagner's *Ring*, in particular, creates a phantasmagorical, heroic German past for its audiences - at the expense of art: "It is very difficult to trace the course of Wagner's inner development - 'not trust' must be placed in his own description of his soul's experiences. He writes party-pamphlets for his followers."¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ *My Sister*, p. 102.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 122.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

Nietzsche was so disillusioned with the power of nationalistic, conservative culture over the proletariat that he argued that the only way to resist collusion was to live in isolation.

In the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno draws several parallels between the music of Stravinsky and Wagner:

Earlier Wagnerian criticism - Nietzsche in particular - raised the objection that Wagner's motivic technique wanted to hammer his thoughts into the heads of the musical idiot, whose characteristics were determined by industrial mass culture. Accordingly, in Stravinsky - the master of all percussion - this pounding becomes the admitted principle not only of technique but of effect as well: authenticity becomes its own propaganda.¹⁹⁴

Adorno also depicts German society as dangerous under the influence of manipulative authorities. Whereas certain kitsch artists buy into official culture, avant-garde artists rebel against official culture. In Nietzschean terms, the avant-gardists are true leaders, perhaps even 'Übermenschen', those that are courageous enough to withstand retribution. Like other *Übermenschen*, Nietzsche, Marx, Schoenberg, Picasso and Joyce, Schoenberg possesses what Nietzsche calls the will-to-power.

Although he relies on Nietzsche's critique of Wagner's music to discuss twentieth-century fascist culture, Adorno questions one of Nietzsche's beliefs. Whereas Nietzsche argues that the radical individual,

¹⁹⁴Wenn die ältere Wagnerkritik, vorab Nietzsche, den Vorwurf erhob, die Wagnerische Motivtechnik wolle den musikalisch Dummen - den der industriellen Massenkultur zubestimmten Charakteren - die Gedanken einhämmern, so wird dies Einhämmern bei Strawinsky, dem Meister allen Schlagzeugs, zum zugestandenen technischen Prinzip wie dem der Wirkung: Authentizität zur Propaganda ihrer selbst, p.174.

if need be, must withdraw from society, Adorno argues the contrary: the radical individual must always remain socially responsible.

Throughout the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, he pits the music of Schoenberg against others such as the superserial works of the Darmstadt School and the aleatoricists (1940s), who in the Nietzschean sense, withdrew artistically. Instead of providing solutions to the gradual death of humanity in art and in society, they contribute to its demise. In spite of their attempts to break the strangle-hold of commodified culture on society, the aleatoricists' excessive freedom and the super-serialists' excessive constriction diffuse their revolutionary efforts. Adorno makes his position more clear in a later article entitled *Music and Technique* (1958):

Illusions - by now totally outlawed - smuggles itself into the work in spite of everything . . . The seemingly abstract or mathematic necessity which is dictated to the musical phenomenon from the exterior without subjective mediation has an affinity with absolute coincidence. It is quite possible that most of the recent experimentations in 'aleatory' music bear witness to this. In obvious disintegration the integral comparison attains to productive self-consciousness negating thereby its own *raison d'être*.¹⁹⁵

Opposing Nietzsche through Hegel's view that art must be responsible, Adorno argues that what makes Schoenberg's music great is its lack of compromise, its unrelenting fight to continue the legacy of a humanitarian art. Schoenberg's atonal music goes beyond Nietzschean

¹⁹⁵ P. 86.

withdrawal in that it is both radical and socially responsible. It is cathartic and is therefore, humane.

Adorno's insistence on a humane art stems, in part, from his own witnessing of the dissociating effect manipulative culture had on German society. The next section outlines the role culture played in the rise of fascism in Germany. The scholar's Jewish background informs his depiction of kitsch and avant-garde art.

Part Two

CULTURE AND THE GERMAN JEWISH POLEMIC

I

Adorno's social and personal context—Jewish self-identification: Kultur as racial ideology—Kultur and racism during World War I—1919-1933: the Weimar era—Jewish perspectives—Adorno's place in the culture debates

Kultur, as Neil Kleinman states, has always been contentious in Germany, and "this impulse to aestheticise reality was itself a basic element in the meaning of German history, even before the emergence of Hitlerian propaganda."¹⁹⁶ During the late nineteenth century, Germany was in a state of social, economic, cultural, and moral upheaval. The industrial revolution had displaced some economic power from an exclusive ruling elite to the *nouveau riche*. Many institutions, once a reflection of German aesthetics and backed by old German money, were seen to 'progress'

¹⁹⁶ Bill Kinser and Neil Kleinman, *The Dream That Was No More A Dream: A Search for Aesthetic Reality in Germany, 1890-1945* (Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman, 1969), p. 6.

beyond those orientations. For conservatives, Germany's moral, artistic and economic past was fading, being replaced by an age of the masses, radical politics, radical art, new technology, and a new social order.

In Germany and Austria, Jewish intellectuals and artists, part of the new social order with their alleged secular, anti-mythical, pluralistic positions, seemed, "imaginatively vested in linear beliefs of progress rather than in traditional, cyclical concepts of fate and blood."¹⁹⁷ Rights by bloodline versus rights by progress was a contentious topic opposing Germans to Jews. They fought "a war of fantasy systems, competing values, and unconscious images."¹⁹⁸

At the turn-of-the-century, when industry and technology flourished, social Darwinism was the prevalent social theory. The 'inferior' Jews, through the likes of Freud and Marx, Mendelssohn and Mahler contributed enviably to their fields. Despite their relatively small population, Jews achieved notable affluence. In Vienna in the 1880's, although the Jewish population was 8.68%. Yet, it furnished well over half of the city's lawyers and physicians.¹⁹⁹ Jews aligned with 'decadent' artistic and social movements threatened German conservatives.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ John Hanson, "Nazi Culture: The Social Uses of Fantasy as Repression," in *Psychoanalytic Reflections on the Holocaust*, eds. Steven A. Luel and Paul Marcus (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1984), p. 38.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁹⁹ Hanson, pp. 35-52.

²⁰⁰ Decadence was also threatening to the small Jewish fundamentalist community in Germany. To Zionist leader Max Nordau, author of *Degeneration*, the new artist was an ego-maniac, an enemy of all traditional institutions, of social cohesiveness, and an organic aberration in German society. In his best-seller of 1890, Nordau associated modernism with death, impressionism with glaucoma, and symbolist poetry with graphomania. Ironically, Nordau's metaphor of modern art as a cancer in the body of Germany would later be magnified under the Third Reich and be used against the Jews as an endorsement of the 'final solution'. As Hanson argues, Nordau's vision of social morbidity came at a time when venereal disease, alcoholism, and social displacement were considered hereditary disorders, a time when social Darwinism, cultural megalomania and militarism were glorified, a prologue to a time when "racial science" would be elevated to the level of a political vision, pp. 35-39.

Wilhelm II came to the throne in 1888. For middle and upper-middle class German conservatives, an answer to rapid changes came in the form of Wilhelm II's rule over the empire (1888-1918). Wilhelm II's influence manifested itself in monuments, castles and military demonstrations which glorified colonialism and grandiose historical fantasies. His exaltation of military violence, baroque sensuality, and respect for the *ancien regime* resonated with the powerful conservatives' desire for an anachronistic present, which, steeped in the past, was glorified even though it was illusory. Against 'progress' it assured the conservatives of the infallibility of their class and the resistance to advancement and the threatening social and artistic changes.²⁰¹ So influential was Wilhelm the father-figure, and so susceptible were his subjects that the relationship took on a decidedly sado-masochistic dynamic. Under Wilhelm, the ruling elite were rewriting history. State ideology was increasingly becoming entrenched in the minds of those who created it and for whom it was designed, offering regressive culture to combat progress: "Culture arose to provide a mystique for a ruling elite in an age of masses. It was anachronistic. . . [and] presented a heroic society based on sacrifice and subordination."²⁰²

Combined with this promotion of a mythical genealogy was the state's indifference to what Herbert Marcuse calls 'repressive desublimation', a transferral of self-hate (or Freud's libidinal aggression) to the intellectual and social other, in this case, the Jews. Wilhelm's fantasies of the mythical history of Germany parallels many of Wagner's music dramas and the revival of great German music. The music of Brahms, Bach and Beethoven now carried a strong nationalistic message.

²⁰¹ Hanson, p. 36.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

From the late nineteenth century to the mid-1930s, social conflicts played themselves out in the arena of art. Bayreuth, at various times during this period, became a testament to the world of Germany's superior people that had descended from gods. To Adorno (and Horkheimer):

. . . the link between Casella's brand of cultural restoration and nascent . . . fascism was no secret, and its call for the expression of a joyful and optimistic collective spirit was taken up by several totalitarian regimes of our era.²⁰³

Cultural restoration and a return to a simple society meant a return to an exclusive society that prohibited radical art and thought. It is primarily for this reason that aesthetics and politics would become a major concern of Adorno's in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*.

During the 1930's and 1940's Adorno treats certain avant-garde art works as a means of rebelling against German fascism. For Adorno, parallels exist between Freud's psychoanalysis and certain avant-garde works. Schoenberg's music is psychoanalysis; Stravinsky's music is psychoanalysis reversed.

Thus, while the debate over progressive versus regressive music may seem to be only an aesthetic issue, when contextualised, the ramifications of this debate are steeped in historical and socio-contextual issues. When tied, however crassly, to social events of Adorno's life, interesting parallels emerge. It is possible that Adorno's positions towards progressive and regressive music were in some ways informed

²⁰³ Alan Lessem, "Teaching American Music: Some Emigre Composer Viewpoints: 1930-1945," *Musical Quarterly*, 3 (1984), 76.

by his context - as a Frankfurt intellectual and as a Jew - during Wilhelm's and Hitler's reigns.

The *Philosophy of Modern Music*, his most controversial, and perhaps most misunderstood book on music, juxtaposes the 'negative' and the 'positive', Schoenberg and Stravinsky, and examines the tensions between: avant-garde and kitsch art, progress and regress, individuality and collectivity, outsider and insider, non-Aryan and Aryan, the humanitarians and the non-humanitarians.²⁰⁴

²⁰⁴ See in Craft and Stravinsky's *Pictures and Documents*.

II

PHILOSOPHICAL EVALUATION

Adorno and Hegel: art as enlightenment—Adorno and Benjamin: dialectical philosophical approach—Adorno and Freud: philosophy as a form of catharsis

Whereas the analytical section of Chapter Two highlights the stylistic influences in Adorno's poetic language, this section introduces how philosophical issues are interwoven into the text. I analyse the opening section of the *Philosophy of Modern Music*. At times, certain statements cited previously are examined from alternate perspectives.

"For in art we are not merely dealing with playthings, however pleasant or useful they may be, but . . . with an unfolding of truth" [paragraph heading, Hegel]. The history of philosophy viewed as the science of origins is that process which, from opposing extremes, and from the seeming excesses of development, permits the emergence of the configurations of an idea as a totality characterised by the possibility of a meaningful juxtaposition of such antithesis inherent in these opposing extremes." This principle which Walter Benjamin followed for his cognitive critical motifs in his treatise on the German tragedy can serve for a philosophical consideration of new music. Such an investigation, restricting itself essentially to two unconnected protagonists, can be founded out of the subject itself. For only in such extremes can the essence of this music be revealed; they alone permit the

realisation of its content of truth. . . . "The middle road," according to Schoenberg in his foreword to the *Three Satires for Mixed Chorus* [opus 28, nos. 1-3], "is the only one which does not lead to Rome."²⁰⁵

Adorno quotes three seminal thinkers in the opening, Hegel, Benjamin and Schoenberg. With his quotation of Hegel's "for in art we are not merely dealing with playthings, however pleasant or useful they may be, but . . . with a revelation of truth,"²⁰⁶ Adorno reveals his agreement. Like Hegel, he claims that art holds the potential for revelation and must reflect and capture the *Zeitgeist*. By default, this sets the stage to implicate kitsch artists, those that are out-of-touch with the world-spirit.

Benjamin's quote:

The history of philosophy viewed as the science of origins is that process which, from opposing extremes, and from the seeming excesses of development, permits the emergence of the configurations of an idea as a totality characterised by the possibility of a meaningful juxtaposition of such antithesis inherent in these opposing extremes;

²⁰⁵ Denn in der Kunst haben wir es mit keinem bloß angenehmen oder nützlichen Spielwerk, sondern . . . mit einer Entfaltung der Wahrheit zu tun. >>Die philosophische Geschichte als die Wissenschaft vom Ursprung ist die Form, die da aus den entlegenen Extremen, den scheinbaren Exzessen der Entwicklung die Konfiguration der Idee als der durch die Möglichkeit eines sinnvollen Nebeneinanders solcher Gegensätze gekennzeichneten Totalität heraustreten läßt. << Das Prinzip, dem Walter Benjamin aus erkenntniskritischen Motiven in seinem Traktat über das deutsche Trauerspiel folgte, kann für eine philosophisch gemeinte Betrachtung der neuen Musik, die auf deren beide unverbundene Protagonisten wesentlich sich beschränkt, aus dem Gegenstand selber begründet werden. Denn einzig in den Extremen findet das Wesen dieser Musik sich ausgeprägt; sie allein gestatten die Erkenntnis ihres Wahrheitsgehalts. . . >>Der Mittelweg<< heißt es im Vorwort Schönbergs zu den Chorsatiren, >>ist der einzige, der nicht nach Rom führt<<, p. 13.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

is followed by Adorno's statement:

This principle which Walter Benjamin followed for his cognitive critical motifs on the German tragedy can serve for a philosophical consideration of new music. Such an investigation, restricting itself essentially to two unconnected protagonists, can be found out of the subject itself.²⁰⁷

With implicit reference to Lukacs, Adorno contends that because society is propelled by economic dynamics, economic rationalism has also infiltrated how one perceives and discusses music. This influence nullifies 'otherness'.

Through this 'argument', Adorno justifies his polemical treatment of Stravinsky's music as 'positive' and Schoenberg's music as 'negative'. He also justifies his 'negative' musicological approach.

Close examination reveals that there are essentially four levels in Adorno's critique. First, at the literal level, Adorno discusses Stravinsky and Schoenberg and their works in themselves. Second, at the symbolic level, he uses these composers' works as consummate examples of kitsch and avant-garde art in Germany from the rise of Expressionism to the end of World-War Two. Third, at the metaphorical level, he uses the works of Stravinsky to analyse the socio-cultural dynamics of German fascism and the works of Schoenberg to present his own utopian ideas and beliefs. Fourth, at the theoretical, or 'purely insightful' level, he extracts insights gained from studying state capitalist culture from the

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

period surrounding and including the two world-wars to apply to post-W.W.II monopoly capitalist culture.

Psychological, sociological and aesthetic ideas perceived by Hegel, Benjamin, Schoenberg, Freud and Lukacs are consistently addressed or alluded to in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*. They are meant to serve as a means of a prophetic analysis of (late) capitalist culture. Adorno's own personal tendencies, his Jewishness and his Mandarin background, also influence the content of the *Philosophy of Modern Music*. Subsequent chapters will show, however, how Adorno's personal concerns as a Jew, prior to, during and after the Holocaust, emerge, perhaps even unintentionally, as the central issue in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*.

CHAPTER FOUR

STRAVINSKY AND RESTORATION

Introduction

In the opening paragraph of the section entitled, "Schoenberg and Progress," Adorno presents his main theme:

The changes that have occurred in music during the last thirty years, have scarcely been seen, until now, in their whole consequences. It isn't a matter of the often declared crisis; that of a chaotic state of fermentation, whose end could be foreseen and which would advance order after disorder.²⁰⁸

This highly concentrated opening is laden with subtle meaning. It is necessary to decipher Adorno's opening to grasp his intentions. The "changes encountered in music during the last thirty years" (ca. 1910s - 1940s) is Adorno's focus. His intention is to trace modern music in Europe roughly from the age of Expressionism to the World-War Two period. The phrase, "It isn't a matter of the often declared crisis" suggests that Adorno intends to examine those socio-cultural, and historical factors that contributed to the cultural crisis.

The phrase ending with 'advance order after disorder' is two-fold. First, it deals with mainstream conservative culture over marginalised

²⁰⁸ Die Veränderungen, die der Musik während der letzten dreißig Jahre widerfuhr, sind bislang kaum ihrer ganzen Tragweite nach gesehen worden. Es handelt sich nicht um die vielberufene Krise; einen chaotischen Gärungszustand, dessen Ende abzusehen wäre und der die Ordnung nach der Unordnung heraufbrächte, p. 36.

progressive culture, or kitsch culture over avant-garde culture.²⁰⁹ Second, 'advance order after disorder' is a historical reference. Restoration occurred most destructively during the reign of Hitler when he sought to eradicate all disorder from Germany. He increasingly prohibited decadence, decadent artists, annihilated Jews, and eradicated the influences of Jews - 'cancerous' elements that allegedly attempted to cause the social and moral collapse of German society. Hitler advanced and restored order.

Adorno links Stravinsky's neoclassic works to inhumane Nazi culture, and Schoenberg's avant-garde music to humane avant-garde culture. To examine the issue of humanity and the loss of humanity, Adorno traces the history of conservative and progressive culture through the works of Stravinsky and Schoenberg. He shows how the humanitarian artistic legacy was preserved in the avant-garde. He shows how conservative culture which the Nazis established in Europe during the 1930s contributed to the inhumanity of German society. He presents theoretical insights into kitsch and avant-garde culture that are meant to configure in meaningful ways in Western capitalist societies as a whole.

This chapter focuses on Adorno's depiction of Stravinsky. First, I contextualise Adorno's text. Second, I highlight his symbolic critique of 'kitsch' art. Third, I show how the philosopher's critique of kitsch culture within the German context is meant to configure as pure insight into cultural agents that further inhumanity in post-1945 Western society. Fourth, I show how Adorno's fixation on the death of humanity reflects

²⁰⁹ Clement Greenberg, to whom Adorno occasionally refers in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, also uses the two categories in his essay "Avant-Garde and Kitsch." Greenberg also claims that "Kitsch is mechanical and operates by formulas," p. 102. In *Mass Culture*, ed. Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (New York: Free Press, 1957), pp. 98-107.

his own traumatised, guilty state as a German Jew in exile during and after the Holocaust.

Part One

CONSERVATIVE CULTURE CONTEXTUALISED

I

*Progressives and conservatives in Pre-World-War One Germany—
Official and unofficial art surrounding World-War One—Primitives in
turn-of-the-century Europe*

In his book, *Western Civilisation*, Roy Willis observes:

Under Wilhelm II (1888-1918) . . . the question could be seriously raised: which was the real Berlin - the Berlin of Albert Einstein and Max Planck, of Gerhard Hauptmann and Stefan George, of Max Reinhardt and Oskar Kokoschka? Or was it the Berlin of Admiral von Tirpitz, Count von Schlieffen and General von Moltke . . . ? Official Berlin can take little credit for the city's intellectual achievements after 1890."²¹⁰

²¹⁰ Roy Willis, *Western Civilization* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 340.

The social polemic between progressivists and conservatives epitomised the fissure between progressive and conservative artists.

Wilhelm II, a staunch conservative, reinforced nationalistic ideology through art. As he stated (1890):

To us, the 'German' people, ideals have become permanent possessions, whereas among the peoples they have been more or less lost. Only the German nation is left and we are called upon to preserve and cultivate and continue these great ideals and among those ideals is the duty to offer to the toiling classes the possibility of elevating themselves to the beautiful and of raising themselves above the ordinary thoughts. If art, as so frequently happens now, does nothing more than paint misery more ugly than it is, it sins against the German people.²¹¹

At times, progressivism and conservatism 'came to a head'. For his play, *The Sunken Bell*, which portrayed the struggles and misery of the working class, Gerhard Hauptmann was offered the Schiller prize. Wilhelm ordered the judges to give the prize instead to an uncelebrated writer of an historical play because he believed they should "inculcate respect for the highest traditions of the German Fatherland."²¹²

To the Kaiser, Impressionist art or any form of modernism was 'art from the gutter'. In contrast, he sometimes donned the dress of an admiral for performances of Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman*.²¹³ Wilhelm (and later Hitler) had his portrait painted in the costume of *Lohengrin*. During turn-of-the-century society, a selective history, steeped in illusions

²¹¹ John Rohl, *From Bismarck to Hitler* (London: Longman, 1970), p. 73.

²¹² *Ibid.*, p. 73.

²¹³ Willis, p. 345.

of military and racial glory was becoming a German reality. Conservative culture looked to the past for its aesthetic personalities. Among many Germans, conservative art was linked to conservative social and political views.

II

OUTSIDERS IN EUROPE

Around the same time, people of other races came to Western Europe. They came from colonies and many were employed in circuses and fairs. These venues answered to the heightened fascination among Europeans with exotic 'primitives'.²¹⁴

In some respects, the spectators' perception of foreigners, and even Jews and Gypsies who had lived in Western Europe for generations, reflected the fissure between European modernists and conservatives. The assumption that 'primitives' were racially inferior was a common perception among 'white' Europeans.

But while social Darwinism was generally accepted in European society, to a few notable individuals, primitives were considered to be racially 'equal', perhaps even more 'noble' than Europeans. Nietzsche attacked social Darwinism in the following way:

Man as a species does not represent any progress compared with any other animal. The whole animal and vegetable kingdom does not evolve from the lower to the higher - but all at the same time,

²¹⁴ Carnivals in Stuttgart, Dresden and many other cultural centres customarily featured native Indians and Africans, donning ceremonial garments and demonstrating indigenous rituals. See in Jill Lloyd's *German Expressionism* (London: Yale, 1991).

in utter disorder over and against each other . . . the domestication (the culture) of man does not go deep - where it does it at once becomes degeneration . . . The savage (or in moral terms the evil man) is a return to nature - and in a certain sense his recovery, his cure from culture.²¹⁵

Echoes of Nietzsche's beliefs are to be found in the works of many great turn-of-the-century French and German artists, from Gauguin to Pechstein.²¹⁶

In her book, *German Expressionism*, Jill Lloyd suggests that certain artists were drawn to exotic peoples perhaps because of their connection to nature in an increasingly industrialised world. Foreigners who travelled in circuses and fairs within Europe were perpetually marginalised. Progressive artists could empathise with their existence as outsiders. These French and German artists' own social displacement often manifested itself in their works:

The metaphorical potential of these subjects (in cabarets) guaranteed their potency and lasting relevance . . . In Toulouse-Lautrec's work, cabaret subjects crossed with the theme of outsiders: prostitutes, clowns, Bohemians - drifting people on the fringes of society, who provided a metaphor for the status of the modern artist as an outsider.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ Cited in Lloyd, p. 116.

²¹⁶ The Brücke Museum in Berlin still has Max Pechstein's stained glass window, completed in 1902, which depicts three (exotic) black women painted with an aura of reverence. Nolde's most famous works are of 'Primitives', Javanese dancers or black Africans; they can be found in major galleries and collections around the world. See Lloyd, p. 115.

²¹⁷ P. 85.

Debussy and Gauguin were exploring exoticism. German speaking artists such as Munch and Schoenberg (ca. 1910) were exercising their instinctual, individualistic voices in an increasingly collective, industrialised and mechanical world. Together, they were fighting against the diffusion of experience. Many Expressionist artists were turning to primitivism for inspiration and as a means of grounding their work in nature.

With specific reference to the visual arts, Adorno states in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*:

When the avant-garde confessed itself to Negro sculpture, the reactionary telos of the movement was totally concealed: this reaching out for the prehistoric seemed, to serve the unleashing of strangulated art rather than its regimentation.²¹⁸

Against what Samuel and Hinton call the conservative's "cult of the past," and "its worship of the aesthetic personality,"²¹⁹ modern artists sought to expose industrial society's denaturalisation of humans. Munch's *The Scream*, for example, graphically depicts the inner anxieties of living in an increasingly alienating urban setting.

Many progressive artists believed that industry alienated people from nature. In a sense, savages represented nature. The 'inferior people' were in some ways, more enlightened because they held a connection to internal and external nature.

²¹⁸ Als die Avantgarde zur Negerplastik sich bekannte, war das reaktionäre Telos der Bewegung ganz verborgen: der Griff nach der Urgeschichte schien eher der Entfesselung der eingeschnürten Kunst als ihrer Reglementierung zu dienen, p. 136.

²¹⁹ *Expressionism in German Life, Literature and the Theatre (1910-1924)* (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1939), p. 1.

Germany's economic and technological advancement between 1890 and 1913 was significant. Racist sentiments against 'others', as in many parts of Europe, surfaced on many levels.²²⁰

Despite technological advancement, German society was characterised not by:

... the existence of anti-Semitism as such, or even the symbolic identification of the Jews with modernity, but [by] the passionate intensity of the emotional revulsion against the machine age and mass society, and the profound need to escape from a realistic analysis of social alternatives into the dream of a national and spiritual revival.²²¹

When Adorno criticises *Petrouchka* on the grounds of its racial attitudes towards social integration, he claims that the work mocks progressive artists, and slyly pays tribute to fascist regimes. Adorno's seemingly implausible claims make more sense when one applies them to Nazi culture. At a metaphorical level, Adorno uses *Petrouchka* as a means to show how art can be used to encourage degradation of the self and of others.

²²⁰ Barred from official occupations within the public sector, a large percentage of Jews ended up in the universities as students and teachers and were relegated to specific educational pursuits in the humanities and sciences. In 1909-1910, the population of German Jews was 1%, but the proportion of Jewish instructors in the universities was 12%. See in Fritz K. Ringer's, "The Perversion of Ideas in Weimar Universities," in *The Holocaust: Ideology, Bureaucracy, and Genocide*, ed. Henry Friedlander and Sybil Milton (New York: Kraus International Publications, 1984), p. 53.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Part Two

PETROUCHKA: A BALLET ABOUT OUTSIDERS

I

Primitives and avant-gardists as 'outsiders' in Petrouchka—Adorno's accusations of prejudice—Music to paint the tragic as heroic—Petrouchka's impact on the conservative

A common dynamic marking in the musical score of *Petrouchka* is 'grotesque' and to Adorno, it exemplifies not only the ballet's character but also its socio-contextual meaning. In the ballet, a magician brings to life three puppets, Blackamoor (literally a 'black' Moor), Ballerina, and Petrouchka. Blackamoor and Petrouchka are both in love with Ballerina. Ballerina is in love with Blackamoor but not with Petrouchka.

In Scene Two, in anticipation of Ballerina's entrance, the ape-like black Moor tries unsuccessfully to crack open a coconut. After failing, he worships it to the sound of a wandering, quasi-Oriental melody of the clarinets. Ballerina enters and she and the black Moor dance a stiff and lopsided waltz.

In the final Scene, Petrouchka threatens Blackamoor over his relationship with Ballerina. Blackamoor murders Petrouchka. "Suddenly - as upon the wave of a magician - the *imago* of the shabby, dilapidated individual [is] transformed into the remedy of decay."²²² Petrouchka's ghost reappears on the roof of the tent above the audience, revelling in his immortality.

²²² Plötzlich, wie auf den Wink des Zauberkünstlers, soll die Imago des Schabigen, Verfallenen in die Remedur des Zerfalls sich verwandeln, p. 135.

Adorno suggests that the story's social implications are deceptively naive. Although it was completed in France, and is about a Russian troupe at a Shrovetide Fair, its fascistic ideas transcend borders of Europe, and even time. It preys upon racist ideas among audiences. *Petrouchka* is a metaphorical work that "[recalls] the vagrant way of life, not a fixed stationary form but rather a pre-bourgeois state."²²³

Metaphorically, the Magician that revives *Petrouchka* is a character like a Wilhelm, but could be a Mussolini or a Hitler, Le Bonian authority figures. The puppets, Blackamoor and Ballerina are 'outsiders'. Ballerina is socially liberal and Blackamoor is a 'primitive'. *Petrouchka* is the naive European who is seduced by Ballerina's radicalism and fringe society. They all contribute to the chaotic circus of the fairground life, perhaps even of the real-life circus of pre-World-War One Europe.

According to Adorno, trouble ensues because the puppets exercise their individuality. *Petrouchka* rebels against his puppet role. The artist, Ballerina falls in love with Blackamoor, the primitive. *Petrouchka* falls in love with the liberal Ballerina, and feels jealousy and anger. *Petrouchka*'s brazen show of individualism leads to his death. "The element of individuation appeared under the form of the grotesque and was executed by it."²²⁴ Miraculously, however, the puppet master, Magician, revives *Petrouchka*. Adorno claims, "in the end, the immortality of the clown leads not to reconciliation but as an evil threat to the collective."²²⁵

That *Petrouchka* should desire the liberal, impure outsider, Ballerina who is, in turn, in love with the one who worships coconuts, is

²²³ ... und mahnen an Vagantentum, einen nicht seßhaften, fixierten, sondern vorbürgerlichen Zustand ... , p.141.

²²⁴ [In *Petruschka*] erschien das Element des Individuierten unter der Form des Grotesken und ward von ihr gerichtet, p. 145.

²²⁵ ... die Unsterblichkeit des Clowns am Ende für das Kollektiv nicht zur Versöhnung sondern zur bösen Drohung, p. 133.

enough to warrant Petrouchka's destruction. In a way, the plot sardonically states that the idiotic Petrouchka deserves death as payment for his involvement with those that encourage racial disintegration. The ballet's portrayal of interracial love is intended to stir up feelings of collective hatred:²²⁶

[It] . . . corresponds to the attitude which music holds against their reproach, the reproach of the amused observer of fair-ground scenes, the depiction of a stylised impression of hurly-burly, with the undertone of provocative joy of the one who is tired of differentiation which he scorns.²²⁷

Stravinsky uses racist humour to meld conservative audiences into a collective. Through his depiction of Blackamoor and the awkward Ballerina, Stravinsky paints racial symbiosis and liberalism in such a way as to cause contempt in the spectator.

Within its European context, Adorno claims that the ballet tells conservatives in the audience, whom the naive Petrouchka represents, that to achieve immortality and to "outbid the coldness of the world,"²²⁸ they must abandon their individuality and rely on the archetypal

²²⁶ As a subplot in the ballet not mentioned by Adorno, Russian coachmen at one point resist the temptations of the 'outsiders', the Gypsy dancers, only to dance soon after with Russian peasant girls. Despite the various groups, organ-grinders, gypsies, puppets or guardsmen within the chaotic crowd, the coachmen are the only ones that dance a symmetrical, heroic dance. As Jann Pasler writes, every time other groups dance, "the crowd swarms, swallowing up any individuals who might have stepped out from it," p. 64. The coachmen also ridicule a transvestite. See Jann Pasler's "Music and Spectacle in *Petrouchka* and *The Rite of Spring*," in *Confronting Stravinsky: Man, Musician, and Modernist*, ed. Jann Pasler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 53-81.

²²⁷ . . . entspricht der Haltung, welche die Musik ihrem Vorwurf gegenüber einnimmt, der des amüsierten Betrachters von Jahrmarktsszenen, Darstellung eines stilisierten Eindrucks von Trubel, mit dem Unterton provokativer Freude des der Differenzierung Müden an dem, was er verachtet, p. 134.

²²⁸ . . . die Kälte der Welt zu überbieten . . . , p. 157.

Magician. "Therein the incipient disintegration of the subject comes into daylight."²²⁹ Individuality leads to unpredictability, social chaos, even physical death, and only through guidance from a strong leader, a prestigious magician - a Wilhelm in the context of Germany, for example, can the German achieve 'life'. "Such vain suffering under knowledge is already implied in the moment of self-annihilation of the beholder."²³⁰ It is only through the efforts of the Magician that "the doll is called into deceptive life."²³¹

The impact of the ballet, declares the Frankfurt scholar, is to instruct the conservative member of the audience how to function in state and monopoly capitalist society: "This is rather like European intellectuals who, with well-groomed naiveté, were tasting films and detective novels, thus were preparing themselves for their own function within mass culture."²³² Adorno claims that the plot also mocks those progressive artists who embrace 'native' culture or who exercise their individuality:

In Stravinsky, subjectivity assumes the character of the victim, but - this is where he mocks at the tradition of humanistic art - the music does not identify with the victim, but rather with the devastating authority. Through the liquidation of the victim it [the music] relinquishes itself of its intentions, of its own subjectivity.²³³

²²⁹ Darin kommt die beginnende Desintegration des Subjekts selber zutage, p. 134.

²³⁰ In solchem eitlem Leiden unter dem Wissen ist bereits ein Moment der Selbstausslöschung des Betrachters impliziert, p. 134.

²³¹ ... trügerischen Leben berufenen Puppe . . . , p. 134.

²³² ... etwa so wie europäische Intellektuelle mit wohlgepflegter Naivetät den Film und den Detektivroman goutierten und so auf ihre eigene Funktion in der Massenkultur sich vorbereiteten, p. 134.

²³³ Subjektivität nimmt bei Strawinsky den Charakter des Opfers an, aber - und darin mokiert er sich über die Tradition humanistischer Kunst - Musik identifiziert sich nicht mit diesem sondern mit der vernichtenden Instanz. Durch die Liquidation des Opfers entäußert sie sich der Intentionen, der eigenen Subjektivität, p. 133.

Hence, Adorno's hostile interpretation of the visual aspects of *Petrouchka* rests on its demeaning depiction of the social 'other', and its mockery of those progressive artists who sought to free art by exploring primitive culture.

Although Adorno seems justified in chiding 'Stravinsky'²³⁴ for his demeaning portrait of 'others', (the Black, but also Gypsies, and a transvestite) Adorno's interpretation of the Magician and *Petrouchka* is problematic. In the ballet, Magician is not as heroic an individual as Adorno portrays him to be. Instead, he is distrustful, and vile. Adorno's reading of *Petrouchka*'s resurrection is also problematic. One can also interpret the final scene as the puppet's rebellion against the mysterious Magician.

But ultimately, Adorno is more interested in the work as a vehicle for an analysis of racial and social attitudes that led to the establishment of German fascism than in a literal analysis of the work. He is interested in how racist ideas were propagated through culture to undermine the German conservatives.

Adorno uses *Petrouchka* to allude to racist attitudes among conservatives that characterised German and Viennese society during the early twentieth century. To the scholar, these prejudices were exacerbated and fostered by the Nazis. Adorno even alludes to liberal artists through *Ballerina*, those that sought symbiosis such as Schoenberg, Kirchner, Nolde, Berg, and later, others during the Third Reich such as Otto Dix, and Webern. These artists opposed conservative attitudes and

²³⁴ Although Stravinsky was the main creator of the work, by no means were his contributions so dominating so as to justify excluding mention of others who also contributed, namely Fokine and Nijinsky. Adorno was not blind to the contribution of these other artists, but chose to discount their efforts so as to heighten the alacrity of his criticism of the 'coopted artist'. Adorno's text is intentionally antagonistic.

were perceived by the authorities as contributing to the social 'disorder' or chaos of the times.

II

MUSICAL SETTING

Through musical accompaniment in *Petrouchka*, Adorno claims that Stravinsky reinforces his fascistic themes. "Pieced together from the rubble of commercial goods . . ." ²³⁵ Stravinsky emulates circus music of the time. He quotes waltzes of Josef Lanner (popular fair music), and the popular dance-hall song, *Elle avait une Jamb' de Bois* ("She had a wooden leg"). But whatever Stravinsky adopts, he trivialises: "The wind instruments," for example, "sound like they come out of a hurdy-gurdy." ²³⁶ The overall effect is both childish and child-like.

The scholar claims that there is a deceptive psychological subtext furthered through musical and visual stimuli intended to appeal to the collective 'child' in the audience. Along with images of magicians and puppets, "[the spectator] is submerged in the sound [and images] of the carousels and he sets himself up as a child to rid himself of the burden of rational everyday life, and his own psychology." ²³⁷ With less resistance from the ego, Stravinsky furthers messages of collective subordination to authority, and hostility against racial others and otherness.

Through music, Stravinsky renders potentially romantic scenes 'depraved'. By colouring, musically, *Petrouchka's* love and death as trivial, or the love between Ballerina and Blackamoor as crass, Stravinsky disallows the spectator to empathise with the plight of the puppets.

²³⁵ Seine Stücke sind aus Warentrümmern zusammengesetzt . . . , p.157.

²³⁶ Die Bläser . . . klingen wie aus der Drehorgel . . . , p.135

²³⁷ Wie er im Tönen der Karussells gleichsam untergeht und sich als Kind aufspielt um dergestalt die Last des rationalen Alltags wie der eigenen Psychologie loszuwerden . . . , p.134.

"The music does not identify with [the victim], but with the devastating authority."²³⁸

When audiences laugh at the plight of *Petrouchka* or *Ballerina*, they laugh at themselves. *Petrouchka*, especially, represents the longing to exercise one's 'otherness'. He is the weak citizen who rebels against the magical authority and attempts to assert his impotent individuality with disastrous results.

To Adorno, the messages in *Petrouchka* are clear: racial symbiosis leads to death; to survive in the modern world, the individual must accept their fate as a puppet; s/he must act in an orderly fashion, and obey the commands of authorities. "Stravinsky designed schemata of human forms of reactions, which then became universal under the inevitable pressure of late industrial society."²³⁹ He "would like to vindicate insanity as health."²⁴⁰ He furthers submissive, collective behaviour by colouring individualistic and social 'otherness' as unnatural.

III

PETROUCHKA AS METAPHOR

Once again, although he seems justified in stating that Stravinsky's music encourages racist reactions in the audience, indeed, the music of Stravinsky's *Petrouchka* is not as 'depraved' as Adorno makes it out to be.

²³⁸ Musik identifiziert sich nicht mit diesem sondern mit der vernichtenden Instanz, p. 133.

²³⁹ Stravinsky entwirft Schemata von menschlichen Reaktionsformen, die dann unter dem unausweichlichen Druck der späten Industriegesellschaft universal wurden, p. 156.

²⁴⁰ ... so möchte sie insgesamt den Wahnsinn als Gesundheit vindizieren, p. 158.

As James L. Marsh has rightly pointed out, Adorno omits to mention the innovativeness of "Stravinsky's rhythmic variation between 2/4 and 3/4 time in the first scene," or "his closely bunched, dissonant piano chords that herald a new percussive style of writing for that instrument."²⁴¹ What seems to interest Adorno here, however, is how music, when attached to visual stimuli (as in film), can further attitudes of racism and submissive behaviour.

Viewed from a metaphorical perspective, Adorno's intentions become clear. Like Stravinsky's *Petrouchka*, Wilhelm and later Hitler used child-like images to create a sense of subordination. As Carl Schorske writes, during Wilhelm's time:

[*Kultur*] became almost a religion, the source of meaning and the food of the soul. Art became transformed from an ornament to an essence, from an expression of value to a source of value . . . The affirmation of art and the life of the senses thereby became, in Austria's finest types admixed with and crippled by guilt.²⁴²

Both Wilhelm and later Hitler assumed the role of the Magician. They expected absolute submission from their citizens. As early as 1892, Wilhelm stated: "In the present social confusion, it may come about that I order you to shoot down your own relatives, brother or parents, but even then you must follow my orders without a murmur."²⁴³ Both leaders used official culture to undermine the ego of the proletariat, by lowering their self-esteem and encouraging them to place state before the self.

²⁴¹ "Adorno's Critique of Stravinsky," in *New German Critique*, 28 (October 1976), 147.

²⁴² *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*, 2nd. ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 339.

²⁴³ Willis, p. 73.

Hitler used caricatures of Jews as 'ugly' and furthered the ideal 'Aryan' to create a communal hatred against 'outsiders'. Racism against 'others and otherness', against progressivists and progressive art manifested itself most destructively during the Third Reich. Hitler, the magical figure, demanded that his followers act like obedient puppets.

Indeed Adorno's figurative depiction of *Petrouchka* and later, *The Rite of Spring* as fascist works behooves some discussion as to why Adorno chooses Stravinsky's works. The next section highlights certain historical documents that tie Stravinsky to fascism.

IV

STRAVINSKY'S TIES TO FASCISM

One reason why Adorno chooses his works to discuss twentieth-century fascist culture is because of Stravinsky's allegiance to fascism during the early 1920s - 1940s. Robert Craft states that Stravinsky "may have been influenced by his Futurist friends, who were ardent fascists."²⁴⁴ As early as 1914, Stravinsky's closest friends included Casella, Roerich and others who would become highly instrumental in establishing a 'fascist' art in Europe during the 1920s-1940s. If Adorno's claim that Stravinsky may have been a fascist as early as 1911 seems far-fetched, there can be little doubt that by the mid-1920s, Stravinsky subscribed to the ideology.

From the 1920s to the early 1940s, personal letters and newspapers document Stravinsky's staunch support of fascism. As Craft states, "It follows, too, that a man with an obsessive, almost pathological need for order would feel comfortable with oligarchies and autocracies."²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴ *Pictures and Documents*, p. 551.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 551.

Stravinsky sought to remain a prominent part of 'official' Nazi culture (1933-1941) despite the Nazis' treatment of the Jews. He also supported Franco and was an admirer of Mussolini. As Stravinsky stated in 1935: "Unless my ears deceive me, the voice of Rome is the voice of *Il Duce*. I told him that I felt like a fascist myself. Today, fascists are everywhere in Europe."²⁴⁶

On 14 July, 1936, Stravinsky wrote to Yury Schleiffer in Rome:

On leaving Rome in March I delivered . . . the second volume of my *Chronicles* with a dedication to *Il Duce*, as well as a small gold medal (representing Napoleon and Marie Louise), with the request that Depirro [sic] present them to *Il Duce* together with the expression of my profound admiration for him and for his work. In presenting this small gold token to the Treasury of the Italian State, I feel the satisfaction of participating in the fine deeds with which Italian patriots have shown allegiance to their party. I had also asked Signor Depirro that there be no publicity . . . In the past, *Il Duce* has always acknowledged the receipt of music, books, or messages from me . . .²⁴⁷

As Robert Craft points out, "By this time, the 'fine deeds of the Italian patriots' included the bombing of defenceless Ethiopian villages."²⁴⁸

Controversy over Stravinsky's proto-fascist tendencies accompanied him throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In Spain, for example, Stravinsky declared his opposition to communism (March 22, 1936), "I do not work with subjective elements . . . my artistic goal is to make an object

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 551.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 552.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 552.

... I cannot accept surrealism or communism, despite my conviction that both are right on many points."²⁴⁹

In 1938, one of Franco's musical directors, Juan Mestes Calvet, thanked Stravinsky for his support of 'The Cause',²⁵⁰ and invited Stravinsky "to conduct two concerts in San Sebastian and a third in Burgos, the city of the Generalissimo's (Franco's) palace." Robert Craft points out, "This is dated January 13, 1938, nearly a year after [the bombing of] Guernica."²⁵¹

During the first decade of Hitler's reign, Stravinsky manoeuvred politically to stay in favour with the Nazis. "If political and financial wisdom were synonymous for Stravinsky in 1933, it was because the largest share of his income came from Germany, and his royalties there had begun to shrink."²⁵²

When the persecution of Jewish artists began in 1933, Otto Klemperer asked Stravinsky to sign a petition on behalf of Jewish musicians being driven from their posts. In a letter to a Gavril Paichadze (1934), Stravinsky expressed his reservations on grounds of his own safety and his potential loss of revenue: "Cautious, because of Germany, I am hesitant about signing. Also, I do not know the positioning of my name on the list and do not want to be next to such trash as Milhaud."²⁵³ Indifferent to the plight of the Jews he asks Paichadze, "Is it politically wise to join the common cause?"²⁵⁴

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 552.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 553, "... pour votre noble geste en nous adherant au document a La Cause"

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 553. In Buenos Aires, after a declaration of his right-wing beliefs in 1936, the newspaper *El Liberal* (May 6) deduced that "a genius can be an infant with respect to the profound social problems of the day," p. 553.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 553-554.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 553.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 553.

Despite his hatred for Himmler and Goering,²⁵⁵ Stravinsky nevertheless wrote members of the *Reichsmusikkammerbüro* on 8 August, 1937, asking for a chance to conduct concerts in Germany: "I am addressing you directly on the subject of a series of concerts that I would be happy to conduct in Germany this season." On September 7, 1937 he wrote, "in the event that I go to America, I will still be able to come to Germany in the autumn of 1938."²⁵⁶

Although he was accused of being a decadent by the *büro* in 1938, through the efforts of his Berlin contact, French Ambassador, Andre Francois-Poncet, the composer was later assured that his works were being performed. Although he was suspected of being a Jew, to continue performances of his works in Germany, Stravinsky had his son sign a petition in 1941 stating that "Stravinsky is not a Jew"²⁵⁷ but an Aryan.

Customarily a fierce defender of Stravinsky, Robert Craft writes in *Stravinsky in Pictures and Documents*:

That a man of Stravinsky's intellect, power of perception and imagination, historical knowledge, breadth of experience could have . . . "looked forward to improved relations with Germany" [ca. 1941] . . . is incomprehensible.²⁵⁸

That Stravinsky may have been a fascist and even a social Darwinian would not have been unique. Indeed, many Europeans and North Americans subscribed to such beliefs.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 553.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 553.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 555, ("Stravinsky n'est pas Israelite").

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 555.

Adorno chooses Stravinsky because of his connections to fascism. At times, however, Stravinsky's fascist tendencies and Adorno's attributions are irreconcilable. This is especially evident in Adorno's depiction of *The Rite of Spring*. Like all of Adorno's criticisms on musical works in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, they vacillate uneasily between practical and theoretical issues, literal and figurative assessments.

V

PARALLELS BETWEEN *PETROUCHKA* AND *THE RITE OF SPRING*

Adorno claims that *Petrouchka* and *The Rite of Spring* share several themes. But whereas in *Petrouchka* conservatism is somewhat more discreet, in *The Rite of Spring* it is blatant; whereas in *Petrouchka* self-sacrifice of the proletariat is furthered through self-mockery, in *The Rite of Spring* self-sacrifice is furthered through glorifying portrayals of self-annihilation; whereas in *Petrouchka*, the proletariat's individuality is undermined through dissociation from natural reactions to tragedy, in *The Rite of Spring*, individuality is undermined by preying upon the fears and loneliness of industrial society, and on the anxieties of war. *Petrouchka* and *The Rite of Spring*:

. . . both have a common nucleus; the anti-humanistic sacrifice to the collective - sacrifice without tragedy, not offered to the upcoming image of mankind, but to the blind confirmation of the victim himself.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹ . . . ist beiden der Kern gemeinsam, das antihumanistische Opfer ans Kollektiv: Opfer ohne Tragik, dargebracht nicht dem heraufkommenden Bilde des Menschen, sondern der blinden Bestätigung eines vom Opfer selbst . . . , p. 135.

In *Petrouchka*, the primitive (Blackamoor) is an 'outsider'; in *The Rite of Spring*, the primitive is an 'insider' called to act as a savage for the restoration of social, artistic and political order. "Not only does the work in the deed actually echo the noise of the upcoming war, but it further reveals its undisguised joy at the wild splendour of it all . . ." ²⁶⁰

To alert the reader to the metaphorical interpretation, Adorno states that *The Rite of Spring's* depiction of fascism is so true to the dynamics of the relationship between Hitler and his followers, that it renders the ballet useless to the *Kulturbüro*:

Fascism which literally liquidates liberal (avant-garde) culture along with its supporting critics, cannot bear the expression of the barbaric. Not for nothing did Hitler and Rosenberg decide within their party discussions against the nationally Bolshevistic intellectual wing and in favour of the petty bourgeois dream of temple columns, noble simple-mindedness and quiet greatness. *The Rite of Spring* could not have been performed in the Third Reich with its innumerable human victims. Whoever dared to acknowledge the barbarism of the praxis within the ideology of the [fascist] movement fell out of favour. ²⁶¹

²⁶⁰ Nicht bloß hallt das Werk in der Tat wider vom Lärm des kommenden Krieges, sondern es hat an der wüsten Pracht seine unverhohlene Freude . . ., p. 137.

²⁶¹ Der Faschismus dann, der die liberale Kultur samt ihren Kritikern buchstäblich liquidiert, kann eben darum den Ausdruck des Barbarischen nicht ertragen. Nicht umsonst haben Hitler und Rosenberg die kulturellen Streitigkeiten innerhalb ihrer Partei gegen den nationalbolschewistisch-intellektuellen Flügel zugunsten des Kleinbürgertraums von Tempelsäulen, edler Einfalt und stiller Größe entschieden. Das *Sacre du Printemps* wäre im Dritten Reich der ungezählten Menschenopfer nicht aufführbar gewesen, und wer immer es wagte, die Barbarei der Praxis unmittelbar in der Ideologie einzubekennen, fiel in Ungnade, p. 137.

Although *The Rite of Spring* is also on a Russian topic, in this case, a primeval Russian ritual, Adorno treats archetypal characters in the ballet as metaphors of modern society. And it is here that Adorno reveals the figurative nature of his analysis.

Part Three

MODERN 'PRIMITIVISM' IN *THE RITE OF SPRING*

I

*Socio-cultural context—The Rite of Spring: theme of the ballet—
Glorification of self-sacrifice— Musical organisation: unoriginality—
Hypnotic rhythms—Latent racism*

The Rite of Spring was first performed in Paris on May 29, 1913. By this time most countries in Europe had realised that war was immanent. Germany and France welcomed its inevitability with parades and celebrations.²⁶²

The Rite of Spring's premiere was most controversial. Audiences were shocked by its rhythmical and visual power. Eric Walter White quotes Carl Van Vechten who attended *The Rite of Spring's* first performance:

The young man seated behind me in the box stood up during the course of the ballet to enable himself to see more clearly. The intense excitement under which he was labouring betrayed itself presently when he began to beat rhythmically on the top of my

²⁶² See Willis, p. 185.

head with his fists. My emotion was so great that I did not feel the blows for some time.²⁶³

The impact of the innovative music, and angular, contorted movements of the dancers caused an uproar.²⁶⁴ A riot eventually ensued interrupting the performance. This sensational premiere eventually paid off financially for Diaghilev and his entourage as the notorious work later attracted venerated and the curious.

Stravinsky began *The Rite of Spring* in 1910. Although the painter, Nicholas Roerich, provided him with information concerning Russian folklore, the composer's contributions are evident in every facet of the work. Stravinsky even gave substantial choreographic assistance to Nijinsky.²⁶⁵

After its completion, Nijinsky described *The Rite of Spring* in the following manner: "There are no human beings in it . . . It will be danced only by the *corps de ballet*, for it is a thing of concrete masses, not of individual effects."²⁶⁶ G. de Pawlowski wrote in *Comoedia* (31 May 1913) concerning the significance of the work to dance, "through the agreement of gestures and music, a strange new type of stylisation" was born - "a style of reflex movements, of automatism."²⁶⁷

The plot of *The Rite of Spring* evolves around an ancient sacrificial ritual. Stravinsky describes his original conception of the scene:

²⁶³ Stravinsky: *The Composer and His Works* (London: Faber, 1966), p. 63.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

²⁶⁵ Cited in Pasler, p. 58.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

I pictured in my imagination a solemn pagan rite - sage elders, in a circle, watching the a young girl dance herself to death. They were sacrificing her to propitiate favour with the God of Spring.²⁶⁸

Roerich provides the following synopsis of the setting and play:

. . . the first set should transport us to the foot of a sacred hill in a lush plain, where Slavonic tribes are gathered together to celebrate the spring rites. . . . Then comes the most solemn moment. The wise elder is brought from the village to imprint his sacred kiss on the new-flowering earth. During this rite the crowd is seized with a mystic terror . . . After an uprush of terrestrial joy, the scene sets a celestial mystery before us. Young virgins dance in circles on the hill amid enchanted rocks; then they choose the victim they intend to honour. In a moment she will dance her last dance before the ancients . . . the grey beards dedicate the victim to the God Yarilo.²⁶⁹

Adorno suggests that like Magician in *Petrouchka*, the wise elder in *The Rite of Spring* is an archetypal figure, not unlike a Mussolini, or a Hitler. The death scene symbolises the self-sacrifice expected of each individual in time of war:

. . . the denial of the antagonism is the ideological trick in *The Rite of Spring*. Just as the conjurer on the stage of the vaudeville theatre

²⁶⁸ André Boucourechliev, *Stravinsky*, trans. Martin Cooper (London: Victor Gollancz, 1987), p. 60.

²⁶⁹ André Boucourechliev's liner notes from the compact disc: *Stravinsky's Rite of Spring*, RCA 6529-4 RG.

makes the beautiful girl disappear, so the subject in *Le Sacre* vanishes.²⁷⁰

As a member of the masses, she dies 'heroically' for the fortunes of the clan leaders. Oblivious to her own instincts of survival, she dies as if in a trance. "The imitation of the primitive should watch over [the individual] with wondrous objective magic in order not to fall for the notorious."²⁷¹ Adorno suggests that both *Petrouchka* and *The Rite of Spring* further the idea that the insider, the clan member, must die internally and/or externally to achieve 'life'.

As in *Petrouchka*, the musical setting in *The Rite of Spring* deprives audiences of any feeling of remorse for the sacrificed girl. Incessant repetitions of worn-out chromatic, polytonal, diatonic, and pentatonic scales diminish the expressive-dynamic potential of the music. Rhythmic organisation emerges as the musical foreground. Repetitive rhythmic figures accompanying 'catatonic' gestures add to the ritualistic, even 'schizophrenic' effect of the work:

His rhythmical behaviour comes exceedingly close to the schema of catatonic conditions. In certain schizophrenics, the process by which the motor apparatus becomes independent, after the decay of the ego, leads to the endless repetition of gestures or words; similar behaviour is, as we know, exhibited in those who are in shock.²⁷²

²⁷⁰ Die Verleugnung des Antagonismus aber ist der ideologische Trick im *Sacre du Printemps*. Wie ein Prestidigitateur das schöne Mädchen auf der Varietébühne verschwinden macht, so wird im *Sacre* das Subjekt eskamotiert . . . , p. 147.

²⁷¹ Die Imitation von Wilden soll mit wunderlich-sachlicher Magie davor behüten, dem Gefürchteten zu verfallen, p. 138.

²⁷² Seine rhythmische Verhaltensweise kommt überaus nahe dem Schema der katatonischen Zustände. Bei gewissen Schizophrenen führt die Verselbständigung des

Adorno treats Stravinsky's unpredictable, overpowering rhythm, and *sforzandi* in the compositions as a type of analogue to industrial society:

In Stravinsky, there is neither the readiness for anxiety nor the resisting ego, but it is accepted [in Stravinsky] that the shocks do not let themselves to be dedicated. The musical subject makes sacrifices by not holding out, but is content with reflexively following the blows.²⁷³

"The destruction of the subject" in the audience, "through shock is transfigured in the aesthetic complexion of the work as the victory of the subject."²⁷⁴ Through 'overpowering rhythms' the member of the audience "becomes conscious of his nothingness in the gigantic machine of the entire system."²⁷⁵

Through his metaphorical depiction, Adorno suggests that within state and monopoly capitalist society, personal moral, ethical values must be sacrificed for the collective social order. The herd must follow authorities to the point of internal and external death in order to guarantee their own survival. At the extreme, as in time of war, this buying into ideology becomes a form of 'schizophrenia'.

motorischen Apparats nach dem Zerfall des Ichs zur endlosen Wiederholung von Gesten oder Worten; ähnliches kennt man bereits an vom Schock Ereilten, p. 163.

²⁷³ Bei Stravinsky gibt es weder Angstbereitschaft noch Widerstrebendes Ich, sondern es wird hingenommen, daß die Schocks nicht sich zueignen lassen. Das musikalische Subjekt verzichtet darauf, sich durchzuhalten, und begnügt sich damit, die Stöße in Reflexen mitzumachen, p. 145.

²⁷⁴ ... die Vernichtung des Subjekts durch den Schock wird in der ästhetischen Komplexion als Sieg des Subjekts ... verklärt, p. 145.

²⁷⁵ Durch die Schocks wird der Einzelne seiner Nichtigkeit gegenüber der Riesenmaschine des ganzen Systems unmittelbar inne, p. 144.

It is in Adorno's attribution of schizophrenic qualities to Stravinsky's music that one realises the intention of his criticisms. Indeed, *The Rite of Spring* is meant to take on all that is harmful in 'fascist' culture. He uses *The Rite of Spring* as a basis to examine the socio-cultural and psychological elements of Nazi culture.

II

SOCIAL PATHOLOGIES IN *THE RITE OF SPRING*

Psychiatrists Henderson and Gillespie argue that severe emotional dissociation and submissiveness characterise the behaviour of sufferers of mild forms of schizophrenia:

The vagueness which is so obvious a characteristic of the concepts which the schizophrenic entertains, and of his thinking generally, has been likened to the assumed pre-logical nature of the thought of primitive peoples.²⁷⁶

Adorno blurs the distinction between those in a time of war whose defence mechanisms are so developed that they react indifferently to social horror, and those who suffer from schizophrenia. Fascist culture prepares audiences to sustain the trauma of war by encouraging the complete elimination of *Affekt* from the non-ego.

Stravinsky's 'auto-suggestive' music, according to Adorno, encourages mass schizophrenia:

²⁷⁶ *Psychiatry for Students and Practitioners*, p. 314.

Hebephrenia is in the end revealed from a musical perspective to be what the psychiatrists know it to be. The indifference towards the world comes from the removal of all *Affekt* from the non-ego, and from narcissistic indifference against the lot of man, and this indifference will be celebrated aesthetically as the meaning of its lot.²⁷⁷

Like Henderson and Gillespie who suggest, "schizophrenic patients may conduct, without any show of emotion, events which in the ordinary person would produce remorse, or pity, or profound depression"²⁷⁸ Adorno claims that fascist culture prepares citizens to react to death with indifference. Drawing from Freud's *Totem and Taboo*, Adorno metaphorically states that the Nazis created a prolonged primitive ritual and recreated a primitive setting of authority figures and tribal members, where insiders and outsiders were sacrificed for the fortunes of a few in the tribe.

The Rite of Spring, but more accurately fascist culture, prepares citizens to react indifferently to mass social injustices as 'primitives'. "The chosen dances herself to death, in the same way that anthropologists report that primitives who have unknowingly broken a taboo actually die away thereafter."²⁷⁹

Audiences are encouraged to envy and compete for the honour bestowed upon the dying girl. The competition is based on total submission even to the point of death.

²⁷⁷ Hebephrenie enthüllt am Ende auch musikalisch sich als das, was die Psychiater von ihr wissen. Die "Indifferenz zur Welt" kommt auf das Abziehen aller Affekte vom Nicht-Ich, auf narzißtische Gleichgültigkeit gegen das Los der Menschen heraus, und diese Gleichgültigkeit wird ästhetisch als Sinn ihres Loses zelebriert, p. 163.

²⁷⁸ P. 311.

²⁷⁹ Die Erwählte tanzt sich selber zu Tode, etwa wie Anthropologen berichten, daß Wilde, die unwissentlich ein Tabu übertreten haben, tatsächlich danach hinsterven, p. 147.

Indeed, the Nazi culture bureau used various means, from censorship to the worship of dead war-heroes to dissociate Germans from their natural reactions to horror. Through his analysis of the sacrifice, Adorno suggests that the Third Reich was organised under sado-masochistic principles: "The pleasure in a subject-less condition, bridled by music, is sado-masochistic."²⁸⁰ Fascist culture encouraged socially impotent individuals made invincible by being a part of a collective, to vent their hostility against others, projecting a latent hatred of the force that continually manipulates them and self-hatred onto the Jews.

Adorno draws parallels between the self-destructive elements of *The Rite of Spring*, *Tristan und Isolde*, and the fate of Germans in the Third Reich:

Anxiety of dehumanisation is recast into the joys of unveiling such dehumanisation and in the final analysis, into the lust of that same drive towards death whose symbolism was prepared in the hated *Tristan*.²⁸¹

He also speaks of the self-destructive tendencies of the Nazis when he writes:

When we speak of the destructiveness of the German mind we have to understand this not merely psychologically but also

²⁸⁰ Das Wohlgefallen an dem von der Musik aufgezüumten subjektlosen Zustand ist sado-masochistisch, p. 159.

²⁸¹ Angst vor der Entmenslichung wird umgedeutet in die Freude, diese zu enthüllen, schließlich ist die Lust des gleichen Todestriebes, dessen Symbolik der verhaßte *Tristan* bereitete, p. 170.

politically, in terms of the desperate character of the whole gamble. The Germans permanently anticipated . . . their own downfall.²⁸²

The Rite of Spring also justifies the right to prey upon others because they are 'uncivilised'. The critic makes subtle references to the progressivists that sought 'otherness' through exoticism and conservatives who considered such exotic culture to be inferior. He states,

. . . the affinity is unmistakable between *Sacre* and the reproach of 'Gauguinism'. It recalls the sympathies of the man who - as Cocteau reports - shocked the gamblers at Monte Carlo by wearing the jewellery of a Negro king.²⁸³

The man who dons the jewellery of a Negro king does so to show his racial and physical power over the 'primitive'. Despite his status as a Westerner, he, nevertheless, displays his animalistic tendencies. Adorno implies that to the horror of many progressivists, colonialists believe they own the right to dominate inferior races.

At first glance, tying the ritual of *The Rite of Spring* to the progressive/conservative debate seems far-fetched. Adorno's interpretation, however, seems less preposterous when one treats the 'clan' as an exclusive group or organisation. Favour with the God of Spring, in an age of social Darwinism, assumes the right of superior races to exploit inferior races. The death of the girl reveals the extent to which

²⁸² National Socialism, p. 415.

²⁸³ . . . die Affinität des *Sacre* zum Vorwurf unverkennbar, sein Gauguinismus, die Sympathien dessen, der, wie Cocteau berichtet, die Spieler von Monte Carlo schockierte, indem er die Schmuckstücke eines Negerkönigs anlegte, p. 137.

the tribe is willing to go to ensure their collective survival. In other words, the wise elders will even sacrifice members of the tribe to ensure their fortunes, much less outsiders.

Other parallels emerge when one applies Adorno's criticism of *The Rite of Spring* to Nazi culture. In answering the larger question of how fascist culture was used to transform 'moral' Germans into a society of 'eunuchs and headless men', the Frankfurt scholar claims that the *Kultur* bureau exacerbated racist attitudes against 'others' and sanctified death for the state as a heroic event. They used fear and intimidation, and appealed to primal instincts of survival to transform individuals into collectives.

Adorno's own humanistic tendencies emerge when he criticises the impact fascist culture had on the German proletariat. Offering up one's ego to the socio-pathological, capitalistic enterprise was self-destructive. By carrying out the orders of capitalistic administrations, not only did individuals undermine others, but in the process, they undermined themselves.

Like Stravinsky's magical leader in *The Rite of Spring*, Hitler staged mass rallies that solidified his place as a magical and parental authority. Hitler ordered heroic death from Germans and the annihilation of all 'otherness' and this he practically accomplished. By forcing individuals to place the state before the self, and rewarding those that acted out absolute allegiance (as in the SS), Hitler made self-sacrifice for the father (like the girl in *The Rite of Spring*) the ultimate honour. He placed Germans into state approved Le Bonian-type groups as in: The League of German Girls, Hitler's Youth or the SS, so their individuality could be levelled down.

Under a barrage of propaganda, intimidation, rewards, and other steps that furthered sustained behaviour modification, the Nazis compelled most Germans to submit. They encouraged Germans to compete for the love of state leaders through self-sacrifice. They transformed instincts of self-preservation into the survival of the tribe. Goebbels states it in another way:

Organisation plays a decisive role in the lives of peoples. . . . every organisation must demand that its members surrender certain individual private rights for the benefit of a greater and more comprehensive law of life, and thereby a goal-directed point of departure for energies which if isolated are powerless, but which if united have a striking, penetrating effect. . . .²⁸⁴

In this process, the German individual lost their 'natural' sense of purpose, intention and meaning. Adorno writes:

If the liquidation of the young girl is not simply enjoyed by the spectator, then he feels his way into the collective, and thinks that he is the potential victim to become a part of the collective power in a state of magic regression.²⁸⁵

As in Adorno's reading of *The Rite of Spring*, Nazi culture eroticised fascist authority. Combined with strict moral codes, fierce protection of the 'Fatherland' and the father, proof of love and dedication

²⁸⁴ Cited in Adam, p. 53.

²⁸⁵ Wird nicht die Liquidation des jungen Mädchens vom Zuschauer schlicht genossen, so fühlt er ins Kollektiv sich ein und wähnt, selber dessen potentielltes Opfer, eben damit in magischer Regression an der kollektiven Kraft teilzuhaben, p. 147.

found its expression in violence against others and otherness. As Susan Sontag remarks: "Between sadomasochism and fascism there is a natural link. . . sadomasochism is to sex what war is to civil life."²⁸⁶

From a 'literal' perspective, Adorno's depiction of *The Rite of Spring* seems riddled with flaws. For one thing, Adorno seems to side-step the purely musical innovations found in Stravinsky's polytonal, poly-harmonic and multi-textured rhythms. As Marsh suggests,

Rather than seeing with Adorno the variation in harmony and rhythm as merely arbitrary, I would argue [contra Adorno] that such variation is a creative interaction between chance and design, individual and universal, subjective and objective.²⁸⁷

But Adorno presents the negative. He implicitly states that temporal, spatial and personal context infuses musical constructs with meaning. Discussions based purely on musical architecture are useful to a point. They fail, however, to answer the crucial questions such as: what makes certain works resonant within a given social group, or what is the message behind the medium?²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ P. 217.

²⁸⁷ "Adorno's Critique of Stravinsky," *New German Critique*, 28 (October 1976), 155.

²⁸⁸ One must also take into account that Adorno's understanding of musical architecture as a critic and as a composer was highly developed. As Alban Berg expressed to his student Adorno:

Whether in the process your musical works (I mean your compositions), upon which I have set such high hopes, are neglected, is a fear I always have when I think of you. It is clear being that you are driven towards all or nothing (thank God!), you will one day have to choose Kant or Beethoven.

Cited in Brand and Hailey's Introduction to Adorno's *Berg: Master of the Smallest Link* (London: Eulenberg, 1991), xiii. Although he wrote compositions sporadically, ultimately, he chose to follow in the legacy of Kant.

In his analysis of Stravinsky's ballet, musical architecture isn't Adorno's focus. His aim, rather, is to present insights into totalitarian culture in capitalist society that are transcendental. As Ward claims, "Adorno suggests [that] Stravinsky's works express an essentially fascist or totalitarian ideology."²⁸⁹ The issue of the suppression of the self is also at the core of Adorno's critique of *L'histoire du Soldat*.

Part Four

L'HISTOIRE DU SOLDAT

Written for orchestral ensemble and speaker, the narrative of *L'histoire du Soldat* centres around a soldier who sells his violin to the devil in exchange for a book which gives him the answer to every question. The time required to make the transaction takes about three years. When the soldier returns to his village no one recognises him. He departs and uses the book to 'live for the moment'; in the process of his travels, he meets a princess who becomes his wife. In the meantime, his acquaintance with the devil continues.

Longing for the past, he gambles with the devil for his violin, (a symbol of his old life). He wins back the old violin but loses his magical book and his freedom. The devil summons him to live in isolation away from his wife.

In his analysis of *L'histoire du Soldat*'s plot, Adorno claims that the soldier is summoned to eternal despair because he tries to recapture the

²⁸⁹ P. 307.

past. The text allegedly reflects an attitude of the disgruntled right-wing individual in post-World War One Europe:

The hero - a prototype of this generation after the First World War, from which fascism recruited the hordes who were ready for action, perishes because he goes against the commandment of the unemployed: to live only for the moment.²⁹⁰

In his textual analysis, Adorno quotes the following:

"One can't add what one had to what one has
Nor to the thing one is, the thing one was.
No one has a right to have -everything -
It is forbidden.

A single happiness is complete happiness
To add to it is to destroy it.²⁹¹

The underlying intention is to instruct European fascists not to reflect on friends, enemies and time lost because of the war: "*La recherche du temps perdu est interdite*."²⁹² The soldier's attempt to reclaim a previous, simple life, leads to his downfall.

When examined psychologically, Adorno suggests that *L'histoire du Soldat* instructs Germans to repress pain and guilt and to cling to the external for "the interrelatedness of experience remembered is the mortal

²⁹⁰ Der Held, ein Prototyp jener Generation nach dem ersten Weltkrieg, aus der der Faschismus seine einsatzbereiten Horden rekrutierte, geht zugrunde, weil er gegen das Gebot des Arbeitslosen sich verfehlt: nur dem Augenblick leben, p. 176.

²⁹¹ *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. 193.

²⁹² "The search for lost time is prohibited." Original in French.

enemy of self-preservation which is bought with self-annihilation.²⁹³ By not reflecting on the past, the citizen, like the soldier, remains transfixed:

... The retransformation of the subject into the prehistoric being is made possible only by cutting him off from the means by which he might become aware of his inner self. The soldier remains under the spell of the mere present.²⁹⁴

And thus, *L'histoire du Soldat* takes on the character of Stravinsky's earlier infantilistic war-time works.

As a transitional work, *L'histoire du Soldat* and his other works surrounding World-War One all share certain features. As with *Petrouchka*, for example, the musical accompaniment is laden with child-like gestures:

The continual change of beat, the stubborn repetition of individual motives . . . drum rolls . . . the musical gesture withdraws from unambiguity, thereby designing a non-alienated state, the rudiments of which stem from childhood.²⁹⁵

Stravinsky " . . . would like to restore the pre-subjective aspect of childhood."²⁹⁶

²⁹³ Der Zusammenhang der Erfahrung im Eingedenken gilt jener Selbsterhaltung als Todfeind, die mit Selbstauslöschung erkaufte wird, p. 176.

²⁹⁴ Die Rückverwandlung des Subjekts ins vorweltliche Wesen wird möglich nur dadurch, daß ihm das Innwerden seiner selbst, das Gedächtnis abgeschnitten ist . . . der Soldat bleibt in den Bereich des bloß Gegenwärtigen gebannt . . . , p. 176.

²⁹⁵ Der dauernde Wechsel der Taktarten, das eigensinnige Wiederholen einzelner Motive . . . Trommelwirbel . . . daß der musikalische Gestus sich jeglicher Eindeutigkeit entzieht und damit einen nicht entfremdeten Zustand entwirft, dessen Rudimente aus der Kindheit stammen, p. 150.

²⁹⁶ . . . den präsubjektiven Aspekt der Kindheit wiederherstellen möchte, p. 116.

He causes child-like, autocratic submission to authority. The music's repressive neoclassical qualities disallow any feelings of catharsis or a confrontation with the horrors of war. The anxiety caused by repression eventually spills over in libidinal aggression against others. This is evident in the soldier's 'defectively rational' manner of speech.

In his analysis of the work, therefore it is the clinging to the external, and denial of the internal that concerns Adorno. Through Stravinsky's infantile music, Adorno claims that mainstream German art disallowed cathartic experiences during the post-W.W.I era and well into the Third Reich. Individuals were encouraged to suppress anxieties and fears in a culture of deceptive harmoniousness. The denial of pain, and anxieties of the war were projected onto the Jews, who were, historically, blamed for the loss of the war.

When one examines Adorno's treatment of neoclassical works during the Weimar Era, one sees a certain degree of consistency. Part Five contextualizes neoclassical art politically and shows how the Frankfurt scholar's early critique of the movement exposes the relations between art and political ideology.

Part Five

ADORNO'S EARLY CRITIQUE OF NEOCLASSICAL MUSIC

I

Conservative Kultur as manipulation during the Weimar era—Music-making as myth-making in the Third Reich—L'histoire du Soldat—Stravinsky's Neotraditional Works—Rhythm in Stravinsky's neoclassic

works—Expressive dynamics—Devastating political and social implications

Although racial antagonisms had subsided during the early part of World War I, with its loss Germany entered into a state of social chaos. Instability was intensified by the far-right until the 'final solution'. During the early part of the Weimar Era, dissent between left and right, poor and rich, modernist and traditionalist, German and Jew, prevailed. In this corrosive climate of hatred, violence, and prejudice, the far-right, unable to acknowledge defeat, blamed the Jews for the loss. The Jews had introduced 'acids of analysis and scepticism', modernist factors that helped to "dissolve the moral certainties, patriotic commitment and social cohesion of former times."²⁹⁷ This included the radical, social, and artistic ideas of Marx, Freud, and even Schoenberg. Freud's ideas on religion in *Totem and Taboo*,²⁹⁸ for example, which portrayed the Christian God as a homo-erotic projection of the father undermined the very foundation of the German Christian legacy established by Martin Luther.

In response to such attacks, many avant-garde artists, protected by the Weimar Republic's frail laws, flagrantly mocked those Germans unable to accept the stark realities of modern society's pluralistic social ideologies, and intellectual makeup. Ironically, these civil disputes inadvertently helped to mobilise a disparate German society into a coalition against modernists.²⁹⁹ And, as Adorno would later state, "In

²⁹⁷ Alexander Ringer, *Arnold Schoenberg: The Composer as Jew* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), p. 56. See also Peter Gay's *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1969).

²⁹⁸ *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 13, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1955).

²⁹⁹ Hanson, p. 39.

their aversions [of new music] pan-Germans concurred with neoclassicists, and the folklorists of the agrarian countries."³⁰⁰

Among many conservatives, modern art was thought to be a disruptive Jewish force that contributed to the chaos of Weimar society. As Erik Levi states of Hans Pfitzner:

Hitler [ca. 1925] demanded that it was the duty of the government 'to save its people from being stampeded into . . . intellectual madness. Earlier, in 1922 and 1923, he had promised to initiate a legal battle against tendencies in the arts and literature which had exercised a 'disintegrating influence on the life of the people' . . . Hitler's views on the arts struck a sympathetic chord with many conservatives.³⁰¹

Thus, neoclassicism with its celebration of past German musical aesthetics, revived dreams of German greatness, conservative values of a colonial world. It celebrated the myth and desires of the German bourgeoisie for an anachronistic past. Neoclassicism also bore the fear of confrontation with the modern age. It was culture that looked to the past and perpetuated dream fantasies of the state. Neoclassicism appeared to many during the 1920s-1944, to oppose modernism and with it, the Jews.

Through conservative *Kultur*, the fascists were able:

. . . to tap the fear of freedom, the self hatred, and the anxiety over disorder experienced by post-war Germany, and to devise a

³⁰⁰ *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, p. 174.

³⁰¹ *Music in the Third Reich* (London: MacMillan, 1994), p. 9.

liturgy of healing and resurrection that guided the populace out of history and into unconsciousness.³⁰²

Neotraditional culture consoled and assured many Germans in an age of social, political, and cultural turmoil.

By the late 1920s, Hitler's persuasive campaign was a Juggernaut:

... melding an inchoate protest into a coalition. Nordic mystics, disgruntled leftists, lunatic anti-Semites, ruined shopkeepers - veterans of the first World War, Hitler's youth movement, a composition of the marginalised, Hitler's electorate preyed on the people's masochistic desire to be dominated, the destructive disease fantasies ['Outsiders as an aberration in the body of the Fatherland], and the dreams of aesthetic reintegrations.³⁰³

Like the *Kaiser*, Hitler used music, theatre, films and literature to propagate ideas of racial purity, military invincibility, and the gloriousness of the Aryan race. In the late 1920s, a period racked by social unrest, mass unemployment, corruption and chaos, he preyed upon the German people's desire for social stability; Hitler promised a return to conservative values:

The most powerful weapons in the National Socialist propaganda arsenal were the mass meetings. Many of the public and communal meetings were modelled on the theatre of the Weimar Republic. Collective dreams had been staged by Max Reinhardt in

³⁰² Hanson, p. 44.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

carefully rehearsed performances in which actors, lights, and public were all fused together in a kind of total art - or a *Gesamtkunstwerk*.³⁰⁴

Against the more than forty parties ranging from far-left to far-right that rallied for political power, Hitler's far-right ideology was the most compelling among insiders.

His political victory in 1933 marked the beginning of a new era in German art. In *Die Musik* (June 1933), Joseph Goebbels defined the nature of Aryan culture:

If art wants to shape its time, it has to confront its problems. German art will be heroic, hard as steel and romantic, sentimental and factual, natural with great pathos, and it will be binding.³⁰⁵

Adolph Feulner (1937) defined German national art in the following way:

The longing for calm, realism, earthiness has permeated the arts. The essence of this change is the turning away from pessimistic negation and abstractions, and the return to a simple world and to humanity. . . . The form must be universally understood and clear. Content must speak to all. The artistic content is now at the service of the philosophical [*weltanschauliche*] education of the people It must form anew the symbol of the people.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁴ Cited in Adam, p. 82.

³⁰⁵ Cited in Michael Meyer's, *The Politics of Music in the Third Reich* (New York: Lang, 1991), p. 174.

³⁰⁶ Cited in Adam, p. 114.

Hans Kilner (1936) explained why neotraditional art captured the German spirit:

Athena is the goddess of war and art; she personifies the strong, fresh, spiritual strength of the human being . . . The picture of the goddess is the fitting expression of the heroic expressive character of the Führer and the National Socialist movement and in the deepest signs of the art the Führer wants.³⁰⁷

Neoclassical aesthetics in every field of artistic endeavour now created a new, 'pure', national identity for Germans. Nazi visual art, architecture, music and literature began to redefine the aesthetic world of Germans.

Nude depictions of ideal Aryan women or soldiers became a standard theme in Nazi painting and sculpture. The sculptors Josef Thorak, Gustinus Ambrosi, and Richard Scheibe, for example, produced numerous nude works of ideal Aryan types. Arno Brecker's sculptures of the thirties and forties, such as *The Guard* or *Comradeship* (both ca. 1938) depict naked soldiers with ideal physical features heroically defending the Fatherland. These images eroticised the violence of the military state.

From a purely functional political perspective, new classicism embodied all the qualities necessary to turn art into propaganda. Unlike the messages of avant-garde art which allowed for individualistic interpretation, the immediacy of neotraditional art left little room for misinterpretation. Neoclassic music, for example, could easily create sad, heroic, dramatic emotional associations to accompany propaganda. Unlike decadent art which was associated with the Jews, neotraditional art could be sold as a 'purely' German enterprise. As Hitler stated, "art

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 334.

must be the prophetess of sublimity and beauty and thus sustain that which is at once natural and healthy."³⁰⁸

To purify German music of its unnatural, unclean influences, Goebbels banned all "... works produced by Jewish artists; works with pacifist subjects or that didn't glorify war; works with socialist or Marxist themes; all abstract art."³⁰⁹

Music periodicals that once furthered the appreciation of modern music were either taken over by the state or banned. After 1933, Alfred Einstein was replaced by Max Schnieder as editor of *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft*. The periodical, *Anbruch*, of which Adorno served as editor for a time during the 1920s was banned and displayed during the famous "Degenerate Art" exhibit of 1936 in Munich. As Adorno would later write (1955) in *Prisms*: "... when I hear the word 'culture', I reach for my gun," said the spokesman of Hitler's Imperial Chamber of Commerce."³¹⁰

Hitler also used 'high German culture' to propagate Nazi ideology. Under the orders of Goebbels, "orchestras played in factories with the works of Beethoven, Brahms and Bruckner featured heavily on the program. The music of Jewish composers like Mendelssohn had, of course, been banned."³¹¹

To replace decadent works, the state commissioned numerous Aryan artists. The works of composers such as Strauss, Rabe, Malipiero and Stravinsky stabilised musical culture ('froze it' in Adornian terms). In another sense, it gave the German proletariat an 'emotional' identity steeped in illusions of ancestral glory. Neoclassical composers helped to

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

³⁰⁹ Milton, p. 119.

³¹⁰ P. 126.

³¹¹ Adam, p. 71.

transform a disparate, uncertain German society of the Weimar era into a coalition during the Third Reich.³¹²

Sympathetic to fascism during the 1930s, Stravinsky encouraged the performance of his neotraditional works in the Third Reich. In 1936, an international music festival in Baden-Baden was held:

. . . organised by the *Reichsmusikkammerbüro* in opposition to the International Society of Contemporary Music from which Germany seceded in 1933. It present[ed] contemporary music by composers of purely Aryan blood including Stravinsky . . .³¹³

As early as 1928, Adorno treats neoclassic music as supportive of the far-right's mandate:

Accompanied by 'sightseers' [Stravinsky] travels in the state coach of the *ancien regime* to inspect the bomb-craters created the previous day. And in no time the blue bird [German conservative] is building its peaceful nest in them.³¹⁴

Adorno addresses Hitler's growing support and shows how neotraditional music, with its glorification of the classical past, its

³¹² For the most part, Nazi neotraditional art would fail to crystallise any works of salient artistic meaning. By the mid-1940s many German musicians were fed up with Goebbels' increased restrictions on what was deemed politically 'useful'. Goebbels (1942) would admit: "... there is the fact that the great philosophical ideas which have been set in motion by the National Socialist Revolutions, for the movement operates so spontaneously and eruptively that they are not yet ripe enough for elaboration in artistic form." Cited in G.L. Moss' *Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural, Social Life* (Berlin: Hoffmann, 1976), p. 152.

³¹³ Lidtke, p. 181.

³¹⁴ *Quasi Una Fantasia: Essays on Modern Music*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: Verso, 1992), p. 9.

suppression of individuality, its reification of human expression, and its desensitisation of the masses, furthers the far-right's ideologies:

Where did the Germans discover this powerful drive which is preparing itself to eliminate all individualism and decadence, subversiveness and aestheticism, and all this shoulder to shoulder with the Youth movement. Where did all this collective healthiness spring from . . .? In music, at any rate, the example has been set by Stravinsky.³¹⁵

His first major article on music in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, "On the social situation in music" (1932), written about one year before Hitler's assertion of power, introduces themes on progressive and regressive music that would later surface in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*. These include the philosopher's general ambivalence towards kitsch art and his championing of avant-garde art. He treats neoclassical music with contempt. His bitterness stems from the power of such music to recreate false communities and to hide feelings of inferiority, loneliness:

[Such music] attempts to make the individual believe that he is not lonely, but rather close to all others in a relationship portrayed for him by music . . . it attempts to show the totality as a meaningful organisation which fulfils individual destiny positively.³¹⁶

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

³¹⁶ "On the Social Situation of Music," *Telos*, 35 (1932, Spring 1978), pp. 148; 155.

During the Nazi era, therefore, neotraditional and traditional art *were* fascist art. They furthered fascism.

In the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno spends less time on Stravinsky's neotraditional music. Instead of isolating particular compositions, he highlights general tendencies.

II

STRAVINSKY'S NEOCLASSICAL COMPOSITIONS

Despite their seemingly opposing nature, Adorno claims that Stravinsky's earlier and later works (ca. 1920s-1940s) share many characteristics. They reveal a reliance on conventional musical praxis. They diffuse the instinctual, subjective qualities and emphasise 'rhythmic-spatial categories'. This reliance on the objective and avoidance of the subjective suggests to Adorno a pathological fear of profound self-expression.

As with his earlier music, Stravinsky's later harmonic style is a 'dismantling' of tradition. Instead of complying with the natural tendency of sequences, for example, that "seems automatically to demand certain continuations naturally,"³¹⁷ Stravinsky offers "a surprise, an *imprévu*."³¹⁸ He discontinues the sequence to be witty.³¹⁹

Stravinsky's rhythmic techniques are allegedly metrical to the point of subjective exclusion. Although the composer's ideas may, at

³¹⁷ ... gewisse Fortsetzungen als selbstverständlich automatisch zu verlangen scheint ... , p. 188.

³¹⁸ ... ein Überraschendes, ein *imprévu* ... , p. 189.

³¹⁹ Adorno's caricatures of Stravinsky's neotraditional music are not wholly one-sided. He does isolate occasional compositions that are successful artistically. One example is Stravinsky's *Scherzo a la Russe*.

times, seem revolutionary and subjective, they are the opposite, pathologically conservative:

Rhythmic structure, however, steps forward as naked, but at the cost of all achievements of rhythmic organisation. . . . Rhythm is underlined, but split off from musical content. . . . There are only shiftings that are 'always the same' and wholly static . . .³²⁰

His 'objective' music sterilises emotions.

In the Hegelian sense, Stravinsky kills musical art. His compositions such as the *Concerto for Two Pianos* fail to express the balance between rhythm and expression that made the music of classical composers such as Beethoven great:

[Beethoven] in his late phase gave up the paradoxical unity as the highest truth of his music, letting the unreconcilability of [expressive dynamic and rhythmic spatial] categories emerge in a bare and eloquent way.³²¹

In Stravinsky's works, neoclassical music becomes formulae. To transform the old into the new, he places music into blocks:

The reduction of all thematic material to the simplest motif [as in the *Symphony in Three Movements*] which the analysts simply label

³²⁰ Zwar tritt die rhythmische Gliederung als solche nackt hervor, aber auf Kosten sämtlicher anderer Errungenschaften der rhythmischen Organisation. . . . Der Rhythmus ist unterstrichen, aber vom musikalischen Inhalt abgespalten. Es gibt . . . nur Verschiebungen eines Immergleichen und ganz Statischen . . ., p. 143.

³²¹ Er selber hat in seiner späten Phase die paradoxe Einheit drangegeben und, als oberste Wahrheit seiner Musik, die Unversöhnlichkeit jener beiden Kategorien kahl und beredt hervortreten lassen, p. 181.

Beethoven-like, has no influence upon the structure. This structure is still the static juxtaposition of 'blocks' with long-standing shiftings.³²²

What gives his later works status is the composer's reputation and its function within 'fascist' regimes. Within the context of Weimar society and the Third Reich, it acts as an emotional panacea against anxieties and social injustices. Within the Third Reich, it sterilises emotions and inspires the military to commit heroic acts of barbarism.

In almost all of his works, Stravinsky furthers the control of fascist authorities over their citizens. He dissociates listeners from their initial emotional reaction to pain and death by colouring as glorious what is normally perceived as catastrophic. A hostility towards individuality, intellectual, racial and cultural uniqueness characterises his works. In league with insiders such as Carl Orff and Richard Strauss, Stravinsky enjoys recognition from fascist European regimes:

Appreciated publicly is solely his *prestige* [in the Le Bonian sense]. Most difficult to bear are the major works of the new genre [*Oedipus Rex*, and *Symphony of Psalms*] in which the collective demand directly aims at monumentality.³²³

With the strength of fascism in Europe during the 1920s - early 1940s, Stravinsky "soon no longer felt any need to damage this questionable

³²² Die Reduktion alles Thematischen auf einfachste Urmotive, welche die Exegeten eben als Beethovenisch verbuchen, hat keinen Einfluß auf die Struktur. Diese ist nach wie vor die statische Juxtaposition von "Blöcken", mit den altgewohnten Verschiebungen, p. 192.

³²³ Öffentlich goutiert wird an ihm nur noch das Prestige; . . . Am schwersten zu ertragen sind die chef d'oeuvres des neuen Genres, in denen der kollektive Anspruch geradewegs auf Monumentalität aus ist, p. 191.

orderliness."³²⁴ His work, like that of Malipiero, Casella and others, achieves its prestige because of its political function within fascist Europe: "The physiognomy of his work combines that of the clown with the physiognomy of an upper-level employee."³²⁵ Adorno uses Stravinsky as a model for the 'outsider' as 'insider' when he writes:

The blasé dandy of aestheticism from former times, who has now had his fill of emotions, turns out to be a tailor's mannequin: the pathological outsider as the model of innumerable normal men, all of whom are similar.³²⁶

Together, 'fascist' composers created immediate, 'communicative' neotraditional music - art that furthered ideology. Together they restored convention and undermined the German proletariat, the Jews, and the legacy of humanitarian art itself. Together, Stravinsky, Strauss, Malipiero and others contributed to the 'new Aryan' culture by reinforcing the power images of the Third Reich: "The objectivism is a matter of the facade . . . an illusion of power and security."³²⁷ They intentionally or unintentionally sanctified the atrocities of the Nazis:

Blind obedience, anticipated by authoritarian music, corresponds to the blindness of the authoritarian principle itself. The statement attributed to Hitler, that one could only die for an idea which he

³²⁴ . . . hat er bald kein Bedürfnis mehr gefühlt, der fragwürdigen Ordentlichkeit Schaden zu tun, p. 190.

³²⁵ Die Physiognomie seines Werkes vereint die des Clowns mit der des höheren Angestellten, p. 158.

³²⁶ Der blasierte Dandy des Ästhetizismus von anno dazumal, der die Emotionen satt hat, erweist sich als Kleiderpuppe: der pathisch Abseitige als Modell ungezählter Normaler, die sich untereinander gleichen, p. 158.

³²⁷ Der Objektivismus ist Sache der Fassade . . . ein Blendwerk von Kraft und Sekurität, p. 183.

does not understand, would eventually be placed as an inscription over the gate of the neoclassical temple.³²⁸

When Stravinsky prepares mythology, thereby wrongly misappropriating myth, there emerges the usurpatory nature of the new order which his music proclaims, but also the 'negative' of myth itself. Of these which fascinate him as an image of eternity, of salvation from death, was what, in time, came into being through the fear of death, through barbaric suppression.³²⁹

Creating kitsch music within Europe during this period, meant a support of conservatism. Creating kitsch music in and for Germany meant a support of Hitler.

With neoclassical music as the primary mode of culture, and strict restrictions placed on artistic production, no longer was there an artistic analogue after 1933 to reveal the horrific impact of Nazi ideology on citizens and on 'others'. No longer was there an artistic means to protest against the deceptive, destructive tendencies of the Nazi regime, and the fate of the Jews.³³⁰

³²⁸ Der blinde Gehorsam, den autoritäre Musik antizipiert, entspricht der Blindheit des autoritären Prinzips selber. Der Hitler zugeschriebene Satz, man könne nur für eine Idee sterben, die man nicht versteht, wäre als Inschrift übers Tor des neoklassischen Tempels zu setzen, p. 189.

³²⁹ Wenn er Mythologie zubereitet und damit am Mythos fälschend sich vergreift, so tritt darin nicht nur das usurpatorische Wesen der neuen Ordnung hervor, die seine Musik proklamiert, sondern auch das Negative des Mythos selber. An diesem fasziniert ihn als Bild von Ewigkeit, von der Rettung vorm Tode, was in der Zeit durch die Todesfurcht, durch barbarische Unterwerfung zustande kam, p. 196.

³³⁰ In recent years Hollywood has made several references to music during the time of the Nazis. In Coppola's, *Apocalypse Now* (1979), for example, the destruction of a Vietnamese village by American soldiers is done to the music of Wagner. In Spielberg's, *Schindler's List* (1993), the search and extermination of Jews in a house is interrupted briefly by soldiers who run to a piano to play the music of Bach.

Through their support of Mussolini, Franco and indirectly, Hitler, their distrust of 'decadent' art, their seeming indifference to the plight of the Jews, either 'fascist' artists were manipulated by the regime or they willingly participated in its practices. What makes Stravinsky an 'ideal' individual to represent the neoclassicists is his knowledge of the destructive nature of fascism, and his willingness to tolerate (up to ca. 1941) this destruction.

III

EVALUATION OF ADORNO'S CRITIQUE

Although Adorno's Stravinsky is primarily an archetype, his disparaging portrayal, at the literal level, is nevertheless controversial. Indeed, in an era in which a cultural icon cannot be perceived as being both a 'great artist' and a dangerous reactionary, much effort has been made among admirers of Stravinsky to cover up his ties to European fascism.

Neil Tierney, for example, recounts Stravinsky's first meeting with Mussolini (ca. 1932):

During a visit to Rome, he conducted some Debussy pieces. Mussolini sent for him after the concert, . . . Mussolini treated the composer with a dictatorial condescension. He remembered afterwards that Mussolini had cruel eyes and he tried to avoid returning to Rome, in case he had, once again, to suffer the indignity of meeting the tyrant whom Cassandra of the *Daily*

Mirror so fittingly described as "the swollen bullfrog of the Pontine marshes."³³¹

Eric Walter White's biography of Stravinsky also alleges that Stravinsky was 'summoned' to meet Mussolini in his office at the Palazzo Venezia. White recounts Stravinsky's recollection (ca. 1960s) of the meeting with Mussolini:

As I approached, Mussolini looked up and said: 'Bonjour, Stravinsky, asseyez-vous - the words of his French were correct, but the accent was Italian. He was wearing a dark business suit. We chatted briefly about music. He said that he played the violin and I quickly suppressed a remark about Nero.'³³²

White also states that Stravinsky remembered that Mussolini had cruel eyes. It is more likely that rather than being summoned, Stravinsky requested to visit his admirable *Il Duce*.

Legions of his biographers and scholars fail to mention Stravinsky's sympathies towards fascism. Such attempts to censor and sterilise the perception of a 'father of modern music' are the very things Adorno opposed. Lowenthal writes: "It is exactly this kind of biographical and psychological reductionism that Adorno always opposed in his extensive studies of the literary arts." Lowenthal continues sardonically, "I might say, I learned a good deal from him whenever I succumbed to an *ad hominem* shortcut in my own critical work in literature."³³³

³³¹ *Stravinsky* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 135.

³³² *Stravinsky: A Critical Survey* (New York, Pantheon, 1964), p. 104.

³³³ *Critical Theory*, p. 55.

Most recently, Richard Taruskin (1996) writes of Stravinsky's allegiance to fascism:

The decision actually to apply for French citizenship was taken - reluctantly - in July 1922, the main motive being the possibility of securing copyrights. The country Stravinsky really wanted to join was Italy, partly out of admiration for the newly ascendant Mussolini. For the uprooted composer, the twenties and thirties were a period not only of right-wing politics, but of social snobbery as well. . . . His position at the head of what seemed a veritable social clique and his virtually authoritarian prestige in musical Paris between the wars were profoundly interrelated.³³⁴

Similarly, Authur Lourie (1931) writes,

After beginning on the extreme left flank of the modernists, he went through a complex evolution and appeared on the extreme right of the position. In recent years he has been the dictator of the reaction against the anarchy into which modernism degenerated.³³⁵

While Taruskin and Lourie argue that Stravinsky made a turn from far-left to far-right only after the defeat of the last White armies in Russia (ca. 1920), Adorno claims that Stravinsky's far-right tendencies are evident before and during World-War One.

Although such a study behooves discussion of Stravinsky's ties to fascism, ultimately, such an exploration is 'moot', only because Adorno is

³³⁴ *Stravinsky and the Russian Traditions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 1514.

³³⁵ *Sergei Koussevitzky and His Epoch* (New York: Knopf, 1931), p. 196.

primarily interested in the works' abilities to convey symbolically and metaphorically aspects of German fascist culture.

For a symbol to have any merit, however, it must have some characteristics of what it symbolises.

At the literal, architectural level, although his demeaning depiction of Stravinsky is deliberately far-fetched, there seems to be some merit in Adorno's demeaning claims. Even writers who customarily champion Stravinsky chide him for his lapses into formulae and facile imitation. Boucourechliev writes for example:

Symphony in C is, in fact, evidence of this temporary dead-end in which everything seemed to come to a halt, contours seem to fade and the musical discourse is reduced to compulsive repetition. . . . The fact remains that one has only to *listen* to this work to observe its weak spots, the poverty of the harmony, the absence of any bold melodic or rhythmic contouring, and the conventional character of the whole cut of the music, never relieved by the smallest challenge or unsymmetrical detail.³³⁶

Boucourechliev also indirectly reinforces Adorno's charges concerning Stravinsky's fixation on 'musical scraps' when he writes:

Four Norwegian Moods [1942] . . . were based on popular Norwegian airs that he discovered in a Los Angeles music-shop. In the same way, *Scherzo a la Russe* . . . subtly transformed . . . the

³³⁶ Stravinsky, p. 208.

famous *Ell' avait une jamb' de bois*, as a kind of symphonic development.³³⁷

Prokofieff is perhaps more critical of Stravinsky's neoclassicism than is Adorno:

The material [in *Apollon*] is absolutely pathetic, and besides, picked from the most deplorable pockets: Gounod, Delibes, Wagner, and even Minkus. All of this is treated with the greatest cleverness and mastery, which would settle the question if Stravinsky hadn't overlooked the most important thing - the most awful boredom.³³⁸

Indeed, at the literal level, the *Philosophy of Modern Music* is intentionally dogmatic and antagonistic. The author raises the question of whether Stravinsky was a 'true' composer or a charlatan to cause readers to react.

As Max Paddison notes, when one examines Adorno's writings on Stravinsky over the years, several inconsistencies emerge. Although the Frankfurt scholar rightly accuses Stravinsky of harbouring far-right sentiments during the 1920s and 1930s, Adorno cautiously praises *L'histoire du Soldat*. In 1932 for example, he writes:

In his best and most exposed works - such as *L'histoire du Soldat* - he provokes contradiction. In contrast to all other objectivist authors, Stravinsky's superiority within his metier threatens the

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 210.

³³⁸ Malcolm Hamrick Brown, "Stravinsky and Prokofiev: Sizing Up the Competition," in *Confronting Stravinsky*, ed. Jann Pasler (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 48.

consistent ideological positivity of his style, as this is demanded of him by society³³⁹

In the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno's hostile depiction of *L'histoire du Soldat* is wholly one-sided, and in some ways, divorced from a literal interpretation.

In 1950, Walther Harth criticised Adorno in the *Philosophy of Modern Music* for his use of psychoanalytic categories to discuss Stravinsky's music, and for his attack on Stravinsky personally. Adorno responded to these criticisms in a way that alludes both to the literal, symbolic, and theoretical dimensions of his text, and to the manner in which he writes:

As a consequence of the philosophy for which I am responsible, I have applied a concept of 'objective Spirit' to music, although without making it explicit: an 'objective Spirit' which prevails over the heads of the individual artists and also beyond the merits of individuals works.³⁴⁰

He continues in his usual cryptical fashion:

Had I given thought to the communication of the ideas and not merely to that which seemed to me to be the appropriate expression of the object, then I would have had to articulate this concept.³⁴¹

³³⁹ Cited in Paddison's *Adorno's Aesthetics of Music*, p. 270.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 250.

³⁴¹ Cited in Paddison, p. 271.

In other words, were he to deal specifically with Stravinsky and his works as objects in themselves, his analysis would have been radically different.

Adorno wrote the section "Stravinsky and Restoration" during 1944-1948. It was around this time that he remarked, "there is not a crevice in the cliff of the established order into which the ironist might hook a fingernail."³⁴²

In the *Philosophy of Modern Music* at least, his one-sided portrayal of Stravinsky is, ironically, multi-dimensional. At times, Stravinsky is a literal figure, at other times he is symbolic and metaphorical. By being dictatorial in his tone, Adorno forces us to question his role and the role of other cultural authorities. Adorno seems to dictate truth to us. Ironically, his hyperbolas are intended to mimic dictatorial 'truth'.

His intention to write a 'socio-psychoanalytical' text on the history of culture in the twentieth century demanded a shocking, brazen treatment of Stravinsky and his music. He hoped that his insights 'above the head of the composer and beyond the merits of individuals works' would serve as a critique of twentieth-century Western state and monopoly capitalist societies.

In later editions of the work, Adorno added a Note (1958; 1969) directing readers to his other works that discuss similar themes. They include "On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Hearing," (1938) which deals in part with advertising and Freudian psychology (referred to extensively in Chapter Six), and *Berg: Master of the Smallest Link* (1968) which employs structural analysis. When one acknowledges the subtleties of Adorno's works, one sees that his scholarship was not limited to a particular discipline or confined by a

³⁴² *Prisms*, p. 211.

particular approach. His primary concern in writing *The Philosophy of Modern Music* was, above all, to create a transcendental text, one that would capture his theoretical observations on capitalist culture (Chapter Six applies Adorno's 'pure insights' to contemporary mass cultural practices in an attempt to see whether his insights are of any relevance to us today).

Part Five examines how Adorno uses the ideas of Freud, Lukacs, Benjamin, Nietzsche, and Hegel to suggest to us how state capitalist culture had a debilitating impact on German society.

Part Six

STRAVINSKY'S WORKS: SOCIO-CULTURAL DEBATES

I

Adorno and Le Bon: The crowd in Stravinsky's infantile works—Adorno and Jung: musical and visual archetypes—Adorno and Freud: Stravinsky's sado-masochistic music—Adorno and Benjamin: aura redefined—Adorno and Lukacs: Stravinsky's commodified art and the totality—Adorno and Hegel: regress—Adorno and Nietzsche: Stravinsky, a Wagnerian

Several socio-psychological theories underlie Adorno's metaphorical interpretation of Stravinsky's fascist works. Fascist culture transforms audiences from isolated individuals to 'crowds'. In their laughter of the outsiders in *Petrouchka*, for example, the spectator "divests himself of his own ego, and searches for happiness in identification with that unarticulated crowd of the Le Bon-like nature whose *imago* of the crowd is contained within the sound."³⁴³

Metaphorically, the German proletariat during the Third Reich becomes an "automaton who has ceased to be guided by his will."³⁴⁴ As Von Kardoff writes, "People are no longer a mass of individuals, [but] a formless, artless mass . . . They learn to move in formations or to stand still, as if moulded by an invisible hand."³⁴⁵

³⁴³ . . . entäußert er sich seines Ichs und sucht Glück in der Identifikation mit jener unartikulierten Menge Le Bonschen Wesens, deren Imago das Getön enthält, p. 134

³⁴⁴ Le Bon, 35.

³⁴⁵ Ursula von Kardoff, *Chronik unserer schwersten Jahre - Berliner Aufzeichnungen 1942 - 1945* (Berlin: Verlag, 1962), p. 12. Excerpt translated by Alix Schmid-Weigold.

As part of the new social order in fascist society, Germans sacrifice themselves for the prestigious authority. As Le Bon states concerning the collective individual within the crowd: "This truth may be physiologically expressed by saying that the isolated individual possesses the capacity of dominating his reflex actions, while a crowd is devoid of this capacity."³⁴⁶

Adorno describes the girl's psychological disposition during the death-scene in a manner that resounds with the collective social disposition the Nazis achieved among citizens during mass rallies:

As an individual, she displays nothing but the unconscious and coincidental reflex of pain: her solo dance is, like all the others, in its inner organisation, a round dance - devoid of any dialectics of the general and the specific.³⁴⁷

While he relies upon Le Bon in his metaphorical characterisation of leaders and crowds, Adorno uses the ideas of Jung to analyse the immanent impact fascist culture had on the Germans.

The Frankfurt scholar claims that "Stravinsky was always prone to exploit children's songs as envoys of the primeval to the individual."³⁴⁸ At the figurative level, appealing to the collective id, dancing bears, child-like images, blaring trumpets and so on, relate to the theatrical facade of Nazi culture itself. With its uniforms and banners and other such images the Nazis appealed to the collective child:

³⁴⁶ Le Bon, p. 35.

³⁴⁷ Von ihr als Einzelwesen wird nichts gespiegelt als der bewußtlose und zufällige Reflex des Schmerzes: ihr Solotanz ist, gleich allen anderen, der inneren Organisation nach ein kollektiver, ein Rundtanz, bar jeglicher Dialektik von Allgemeinem und Besonderem, p. 147.

³⁴⁸ ... stets entbot Strawinsky Kinderlieder als Abgesandte der Vorzeit ans Individuum, p. 150.

The thoroughly close relationship between this ambition and the doctrines of Carl Gustav Jung, which Stravinsky could hardly have known, is as striking as is the reactionary potential indicated by it. The search for musical equivalents of the 'collective unconscious' prepares the transition to the installation of a regressive society as positive.³⁴⁹

He also quotes a Berlin critic to allude to his poetic treatment of the *Rite of Spring*:

Stravinsky's "folk" is a "collectively experiencing community related by clan - the primeval womb of all symbols - myths - metaphysical powers which create religion . . ." This conception . . . later appeared in Germany in a sinister context. . .³⁵⁰

It is the myths and symbols used by fascists that interest Adorno, not only those in *The Rite of Spring*. Through Stravinsky's works Adorno states that state capitalist art furthers:

. . . self-elimination, unconscious dexterity, and adjustment to the blind totality. The sacrifice of the self, expected of every individual by the new form of organisation, attracts a primeval

³⁴⁹ Die überaus enge Verwandtschaft dieser Ambition mit der Doktrin C.G. Jungs, von der der Komponist kaum etwas wissen mochte, ist so schlagend wie das reaktionäre Potential. Die Suche nach musikalischen Äquivalenten für das "Kollektive Unbewußte" bereitet den Umschlag zur Instaurierung der regressiven Gemeinschaft als eines Positiven vor, p. 143.

³⁵⁰ . . . Strawinskys "Volk" sei "kollektiv erlebende Gemeinsamkeit Stammesverwandter, der Urschoß aller Symbole - Mythen - religionsbildender metaphysischer Kräfte" . . . Diese Auffassung . . . Tenor später in Deutschland in sinistrem Zusammenhang vorkam . . ., p. 152.

past, and is, at the same time, occupied with the horror before a future in which one must leave behind everything which made him who he is, and for whose sake, the whole machinery of adjustment is meant to function.³⁵¹

Although Adorno is indebted to Carl Jung for his conceptions of the collective unconscious and the archetype, his analysis of certain psychological tendencies of 'fascist' artists is indebted to Freud.

The Frankfurt scholar analyses the archetypal authoritarian, Stravinsky, to explain the basic motivations of artists who worked willingly under fascism. Like other 'fascists', Stravinsky "... mocks the tradition of humanistic art."³⁵² Conformist composers also share a weakness, an inability to create anew. Their music becomes, "a secret product of censorship, of self-prohibition of all impulses which do not agree with stylising principles."³⁵³ Adorno even uses the 'particles' of traditional music as a metaphor of social relations:

These melodic particles ... are ... never 'atonal', totally free from no previously established, scale related succession of intervals. At times it is a matter of a limited selections of the twelve tones ... as if the other tones were taboo and not to be touched.³⁵⁴

³⁵¹ ...Selbstdurchstreichung, bewußtlose Geschicklichkeit, Einpassung in die blinde Totalität. Das Opfer des Selbst, das die neue Organisationsform jedem zumutet, lockt als Urvergangenheit und ist zugleich mit dem Grauen vor einer Zukunft besetzt, in der man all das fahren lassen muß, wodurch man der ward, um dessen Erhaltung willen doch die ganze Anpassungsmaschine funktioniert, p. 156.

³⁵² ... Stravinsky... mokiert ... sich über die Tradition humanistischer Kunst ... , p. 133.

³⁵³ ... mit musikalischer Zensur, einem sich Verbieten aller nicht mit dem Stilisierungsprinzip vereinbarten Impulse, p. 143.

³⁵⁴ Die Melodiepartikeln, ... sind ... nie "atonale", ganz freie, auf keine vorgeordnete Skala bezogene Sukzession von Intervallen. Zuweilen handelt es sich um eine beschränkte Auswahl aus den zwölf Tönen ... so als wären die anderen Töne tabu und dürften nicht berührt werden, pp. 139-140.

In their works, fascist composers avoid 'taboo notes' because of their fear of internal and external 'otherness': "Stravinsky reacts vehemently against the movement which is not made visible through the general - actually against all traces of the socially incomprehensible."³⁵⁵

Like the others, Stravinsky's works resemble that of "a child who dismantles his toys and then puts them together incorrectly."³⁵⁶ Like other neotraditionalists, he avoids expressive-dynamics because:

This grim health, which clamours to the external and denies the spiritual, as though this were already a disease of the soul, is a product of defence mechanisms in the Freudian sense.³⁵⁷

Restorationist artists' reliance on the models they adopt, mask a frustration at being unable to crystallise the *Zeitgeist*:

Despite all this, there is no doubt that his work, hostile to the dream, is inspired by the dream of authenticity and the fear of emptiness, an anxiety of the futility of that which no longer finds social resonance and is chained to the ephemeral fate of the individual.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁵ ... Strawinsky reagiert heftig gegen die nicht durch das Allgemeine sichtbar bestimmte Regung; eigentlich gegen alle Spur des gesellschaftlich Unerfaßten, p. 127.

³⁵⁶ Wie ein Kind Spielzeug demontiert und dann mangelhaft wieder zusammensetzt, p. 170.

³⁵⁷ Die verbissene Gesundheit, die sich ans Auswendige klammert und das Seelische verleugnet, als wäre es bereits Krankheit der Seele, ist Produkt von Abwehrmechanismen im Freudischen Sinn, p. 154.

³⁵⁸ Trotzdem ist kein Zweifel daran, daß sein traumfeindliches Werk vom Traum der Authentizität inspiriert ist, einem horror vacui, der Angst vor der Vergeblichkeit dessen, was keine gesellschaftliche Resonanz mehr findet und gekettet sei ans ephemere Schicksal des Einzelnen, p. 128.

Ultimately, the realisation of great art belongs to those that are strong enough to stand alone, not to those who congregate.

Hence, when Adorno uses the concepts of Freud to accuse Stravinsky of being an authoritarian personality, this depiction is both literal and symbolic. When Adorno writes concerning Stravinsky's music: "Its concern is, rather, to dominate schizophrenic streaks through the aesthetic consciousness" or "Stravinsky's *fabula docet* (presented fable) furthers versatile and obstinate obedience,"³⁵⁹ Stravinsky is now a Goebbels or a Rosenberg, an authoritarian personality who uses culture to cause supine submissiveness and hysterical obedience in the masses.

By drawing parallels between 'primitives' and the 'evolved', the philosopher also acknowledges the position of Freud (and Nietzsche) that the disparity between the civilised and the uncivilised is not as wide as the social Darwinists claim. Like primitives, civilised societies also have sacrificial rituals. Primal, herd-like instincts are at their most naked in times of war.

Adorno's depiction of Stravinsky's regressive works in relation to the 'theatre of life' resonates with Benjamin's ideas on film. According to Adorno, the film and Stravinsky's ballet share several similarities: "In film, image, word and sound are disparate. The music of film obeys laws similar to those of the ballet."³⁶⁰

Visual and aural stimuli are disparate elements and can be manipulated by the artist to achieve the appropriate reactions in an audience. As in the ballet, film music attaches intended emotional responses to particular visual stimuli. Even the manner in which a scene

³⁵⁹ ... es vielmehr ihr Anliegen ist, schizophrenische Züge durch das ästhetische Bewußtsein zu beherrschen ... , p. 158; Das *fabula docet* Strawinskys ist versatile Fugsamkeit und störrischer Gehorsam. ... , p. 182-183.

³⁶⁰ In ihm sind Bild, Wort und Ton disparat. Filmmusik gehorcht ähnlichen Gesetzen wie die des Balletts, p. 161.

is framed suggests a perspective. In the hands of a competent director, kitsch art can transform the opinions of an audience.

Within the theatre of life during the Third Reich, the works of Richard Strauss, for example, propagated ideology:

The fact that Richard Strauss at one time attempted to translate a philosophical work, Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, into program music, is no proof of the contrary. One may rather say that philosophy, as well as religion or as the *l'art pour l'art* doctrine of symbolism, is for sale in Strauss' music, and that the very way it is treated as a subject matter destroys it as the true life basis of the works which so glibly deal with all kinds of philosophical ideals and values.³⁶¹

Neotraditional culture created collective ideas of social superiority.

By treating the film as a disparate collection of visual and aural artistic elements, Adorno redefines Benjamin's concept of aura. Contra Benjamin, Adorno argues that essentially, the medium is the message. It owns the power to dictate false attributions of authority, authenticity and essence to the masses.

He agrees with Benjamin, however, that artistic reproduction in the musical sense, sterilises emotions:

Every complex restricts itself to basic material which resembles something photographed from changing perspectives but essentially untouched in its harmonic-melodic nucleus. This resulting lack of actual musical forms gives the whole his sense of immortality: the omission of dynamics mirrors eternity in which

³⁶¹ National Socialism, p. 420.

only a few devilish metrical tricks bring some diversion. The objectivism is 'matter' of the facade because there is nothing to objectify. . . .³⁶²

But rather than agreeing with Benjamin that the sterilisation of the emotions through bourgeois art is a revolutionary act actually that kills the reception of bourgeois art, Adorno claims that this sterilisation blunts innate aesthetic sensitivities. And it was, in part, this death of feeling which contributed to the social indifference exhibited by many Germans during the events that led to the Holocaust:

It is this lack of experience of the imagery of real art, partially substituted and parodied by the ready-made stereotypes which are at least one of the formative elements that has finally transformed the Germans, Beethoven's own people, into Hitler's own people.³⁶³

In Lukacsian terms, fascist neoclassical music is 'second language' music. Second language music is synthetic and primitive; it bears the markings of technology. During the Third Reich, administrations established neoclassical art as the only form permitted. Neoclassical art bore in its inner qualities the characteristics of economic rationalism. It was used to 'dominate human nature' in the Lukacsian sense: "German ideology commands that exactly this moment be covered: the domination

³⁶² Jeder Komplex beschränkt sich auf ein gleichsam in wechselnden Einstellungswinkeln photographiertes, aber im harmonisch-melodischen Kern unberührtes Ausgangsmaterial. Der daraus resultierende Mangel an eigentlich musikalischer Form gibt dem Ganzen seine Art des Unvergänglichen: das Fortlassen von Dynamik spiegelt Ewigkeit vor, in welche eben noch die metrischen Teufeleien einige Abwechslung bringen. Der Objektivismus ist Sache der Fassade, weil es nichts zu objektivieren gibt. . . ., p. 183.

³⁶³ National Socialism, p. 419.

of the artist over nature should appear as nature itself."³⁶⁴ Its immediacy and power to dictate ideology contributed to the inhumanity and irrationality of the social totality.

In Hegelian terms, neotraditional fascist art contributed to the slow death of German society. It failed to further contemporary emotional and spiritual insights into the world. Instead of furthering the process of perpetual, emotional *Erlebnis*, "all becoming [was] eliminated, as though it were the pollution of the object itself."³⁶⁵ Neotraditional fascist art failed to afford the possibility of experiencing 'truth'.

Adorno also relies on Nietzsche's depiction of Wagner ³⁶⁶ as an anti-Semite to evaluate the works of Stravinsky. He states,

His effort to fashion the non-conceptual language of music into an organ of the pre-ego, falls into the very same tradition of

³⁶⁴ . . . die deutsche Ideologie gebietet, eben dieses Moment zu verdecken: gerade die Herrschaft des Künstlers über die Natur soll selber als Natur erscheinen, p.170.

³⁶⁵ Alles Werden ist ausgespart, als wäre es die Verunreinigung der Sache selbst, p. 183.

³⁶⁶ Like Nietzsche's *The Case of Wagner*, Adorno portrays Wagner as a weak individual unable to assert his own individuality, as one who sells dream fantasies of security and power at the expense of individuality and difference. Adorno writes, "the distortion of the myths at the hands of later generations [Nazis] who discover themselves and mirror themselves in them is also its truth," p. 123. Adorno exposes ridiculous caricatures of Jews portrayed in *Die Meistersinger* and *Der Ring der Nibelungen*. Wagner's racial humour, "stirs up the oldest sources of the German hatred of the Jews," p. 21. In the portrayal of Hanslick-Beckmesser . . . in the excitement caused by the laughter at his expense, the memory of the injustice that he has suffered is obliterated. The use of laughter to suspend justice is debased into a charter for injustice, p. 21. Adorno continues, "sometimes these elements of aversion and laughter come together in a clash of words. . . Siegfried says to Mime: the loquacious, overflowing with self-praise and spite: "When I watch you standing, shuffling, and shambling servilely stooping, squinting and blinking, I long to seize you by your nodding neck and make an end of your obscene blinking!" (Siegfried, Act 1, Sc. 1), p. 22-23. In *Search of Wagner*, 2nd. ed., trans. Rodney Livingstone (London: New Left Books, 1981). As Nietzsche did, charging Wagner with a spiteful hatred of Jews, Adorno also accuses Wagner of being an anti-Semite.

Schopenhauer and Wagner which he as a stylistic technician and cultural politician condemns.³⁶⁷

Adorno classifies both Stravinsky and Wagner as cultural politicians for several reasons. Both are racists and use their art as party pamphlets. Both use racial humour to rally German collectives against 'others' and 'otherness'. Both indirectly create myths of racial superiority, Wagner through his glorification of Germany's Aryan heritage, Stravinsky through his neoclassical works: "the mythologising tendency of *Le Sacre* continues the Wagnerian"³⁶⁸ legacy. Like other artists employed by the German *Kulturbüro*, Stravinsky indirectly reinforces the images of the pure, great Aryan clan. Like Strauss, Orff, Breker and Thorak, Stravinsky undermines the proletariat by reinforcing images of power and false security.

According to Adorno, both Wagner and Stravinsky are weak. Whereas to Nietzsche, Wagner is a swine, to Adorno, Stravinsky is a 'tailor's dummy'. Both gain prestige through a support of the authorities. Fascist artists are too weak to be *Übermenschen*. Of Stravinsky's music, for example, the Frankfurt scholar writes, "Its objective is a subjective arrangement, elevated to the level of superhuman *a priori*, pure legality."³⁶⁹

In an ironic twist of Nietzsche's will-to-power, however, Stravinsky is also strong. To the Frankfurt scholar, Stravinsky is 'strong' enough to ignore the political and artistic damage he creates through self-

³⁶⁷ Seine Anstrengung, die begriffslose Sprache der Musik zum Organ des vor-
Ichlichen zu machen, fällt in eben die Tradition, die er als Stiltechniker und
Kulturpolitiker verfemt, die Schopenhauers und Wagners, p.153.

³⁶⁸ Daher setzt die mythologisierende Tendenz des *Sacre* die Wagnerische fort
..., p. 153.

³⁶⁹ Ihre Objektivität ist subjektives Arrangement, aufgespreizt zur
übermenschlichen apriorisch reinen Gesetzlichkeit, p. 183.

interest. In a sense, Stravinsky is symbolic of the way in which the Nazis corrupted Nietzsche's concept of the will-to-power - to justify barbaric actions that went 'beyond good and evil'.³⁷⁰ Stravinsky is bright enough to know his self-interests, and, strong enough to back the Nazis, beyond good and evil, to achieve them.

A questioning such as that of the 'superhuman' status of Stravinsky, therefore, applies in varying degrees to those artists whom modern cultural administrations herald as 'great'. In Adorno's terms they would include Elgar, Shostakovich and Kabalevsky. While they are sold as 'supermen', it is possible that they may have achieved this reputation through the efforts of culture industries. Their works ought to be judged individually to see whether they are of genius quality or merely sold as such.

Thus, Adorno implies that fascist conservative culture contributed to the loss of humanity in Europe in several ways. Conservative culture appealed to the longing for security and belonging in an increasingly alienating world. It encouraged self-worth on one hand, and furthered images of power and racial superiority through allegiance to the state on the other. The state provided the individual with an identity and dissociated them from their natural reaction to pain and loss of the self. Fascist culture bureaux marginalised all works that revealed the inhumane, sterilising impact of capitalist culture. This legacy of fascism in Germany started, however, even during the early part of the twentieth century. Adorno writes:

³⁷⁰ Clearly, an informed reading of Nietzsche's works will reveal that he was at heart, a moralist. As Rose, and Kaufmann note, Nietzsche's ideas concerning social irresponsibility and even the will-to-power must be understood within the context in which he wrote. Nietzsche was weary of what he believed to be an increasingly self-destructive German society. In many respects his will-to-power concept is informed by the hope that Germans would look beyond the entrapments of pseudo-moral and Christian virtues.

[Traditional works] are, and were long before the rise of fascism, in a certain way 'on exhibition', things to look at, maybe to admire, maybe to enjoy . . . but they became within the general consciousness of the consuming audiences, more or less deprived of any intrinsic and compelling meaning of their own. This has sucked their life blood away even if their facade was still intact in German opera houses, concert halls and art galleries . . . The public actually was the victim of this whole process since the works became mute to the listener and lost any deeper hold on his experience, his development and his philosophy.³⁷¹

Indeed, his examination of fascism through Stravinsky and his works was affected by Adorno's own experiences as a Jew. The next section examines Adorno's own personal context during the time in which he wrote the *Philosophy of Modern Music*.

II

ADORNO'S EXILE IN AMERICA

When he realised that reconciliation was not possible between Germans and Jews, Adorno emigrated first to England (1936), then, later, to America (1939). American culture repulsed Adorno largely because the 'commodity fetishisms' he perceived in American popular culture resonated with the way 'pure' culture was being utilised in Germany - to turn 'men into machines'. Adorno's faded heritage and the impending

³⁷¹ National Socialism, p. 418.

disaster for Jews were now obsessions. Certain aspects of American society reminded him constantly of fascism.

In America of the 1930s and 1940s, racism was rampant. As David Wyman comments for instance: "anti-Semitism and anti-immigration attitudes were both widespread in American society and both entrenched in Congress."³⁷² And as Hanson states:

A more subtle social and economic discrimination against Jews was accepted and practised by millions of respectable Americans. Beneath the surface, were uncrystallised but negative feelings about Jews. In ordinary times, this passive anti-Semitism would have worked little damage.³⁷³

Racist organisations in America such as the *Silver Shirts*, *Christian Mobilizers*, *Crusaders*, *Defenders*, *Knights of the White Camellia*, *The Ku Klux Klan* and others, grew increasingly in numbers and popularity during the 1930s, fuelled by the success of the Nazis. Their attacks against all those branded different: Blacks, Hispanics, Gays and Lesbians, Jews, Native Indians often went unreported by the media. Adorno was witness to extremely popular radio programmes and films which featured characters such as *Amos 'n' Andy* or Al Jolson, characters that built their humour on caricatures of blacks and other minorities.

Racism was also rife in academic institutions. As Roger Sessions writes, the influx of German artists caused "a competitive fear which at

³⁷² *The Abandonment of the Jews* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), p. 34.

³⁷³ Hanson, p. 45.

least for a time poisoned the musical atmosphere and made it one of exclusiveness.³⁷⁴ Krenek recalled:

. . . a scurrilous pamphlet that had been widely circulated . . . that argued that Hitler, in expelling twelve-tone composers, had successfully killed two birds with one stone: he had purified German culture of non-Aryan elements and at the same time ensured that America would be driven aground by the abominable doctrine that the refugees had brought with them.³⁷⁵

In America, Adorno's scholarly status was greatly diminished. He assumed a position as part-time director of the music division of Princeton University's Radio Research Project, led by Paul Lazarsfeld, an émigré from Austria, renowned for his empirical research. Adorno's deconstructive tendencies went directly against Lazarsfeld's methods and indeed, exclusive positivism. He couldn't justify, for example, Lazarsfeld's statistical methods, basing conclusions on data derived solely from sending 'questionnaires addressed to their victims'.³⁷⁶

In a poignant personal moment in *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life* (ca. 1940), Adorno confesses:

Every intellectual in emigration is, without exception, mutilated . . . He lives in an environment that must remain incomprehensible to him, however flawless his knowledge of trade-union organisations, of the automobile industry may be; he is always

³⁷⁴ *Roger Sessions on Music: Collected Essays*, ed. E. T. Cone (Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 164.

³⁷⁵ "Teaching American Music: Some Emigre Composer Viewpoints: 1930-1945." *Musical Quarterly*, 1(1984), 7.

³⁷⁶ Cited in Jay's *Adorno*, p. 34.

astray . . . Between the reproduction of his own existence under the monopoly of mass culture, and impractical, responsible work, yawns an irreconcilable breach. His language has been expropriated, and the historical dimension that nourished his knowledge, sapped. The isolation is made worse by the formation of close and politically-controlled groups, mistrustful of their members, hostile to those branded different.³⁷⁷

Adorno was deeply troubled by composers and artists who escaped from the war in Europe only to ignore the plight of the Jews. Indifference to him was masked support of the Nazis. When one considers his literary output of this period, an analysis of fascism seems to be his most important concern.

Indeed, "Stravinsky and Restoration," is but one star in a constellation of works all written during the late 1930s, 1940s and early 1950s, dedicated to an analysis of fascism. Other stars include Adorno's contribution to *The Authoritarian Personality: A Studies in Prejudice Project*, a massive psychological text tracing racist and fascistic attitudes among Americans perpetuated through media, religious and other traditional institutions; "What National Socialism Has Done to the Arts (1945)" and "The Musical Climate for Fascism" (1945) are similar articles dealing with how Nazis used culture to undermine the German proletariat, and the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947) along with "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda" (1951) which draw parallels between fascist Nazi and American culture. Adorno's "Stravinsky and Restoration" was written during the time in which Adorno was deeply traumatised by the Holocaust.

³⁷⁷ P. 40.

If anything, however, his text on music sympathises not only with victims of the Holocaust but also with the victims of Hitler's regime, Beethoven's own people.

During the period in which he wrote the section, "Stravinsky and Restoration", Adorno was extremely bitter.³⁷⁸ This bitterness permeates the essay. In one sense, it is clear that Adorno's view of Stravinsky, taken at the literal level was conditioned by Stravinsky's actual political views. But to interpret the section, "Stravinsky and Restoration" simply as a literal critique of Stravinsky and his music, is to cling to the surface without getting to the essence of Adorno's writing. Marsh writes:

If one reads him according to the dominant mode of thinking . . . calculative, analytic, rigorous, committed to clear-cut distinctions between concepts as the main task in philosophy one is going to be frustrated . . . He brings into question not only the content but the form of bourgeois rationality, a method that conceives thinking as easily getting hold of something, testing it, verifying it, possessing it, controlling it.³⁷⁹

His 'tyrannical' critique attempts to cause the reader to dispute the 'dictatorial' language of experts and exclusive intellectual canons in all their guises.

Through the metaphor of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, however, the scholar examines the roots of criticism of fascist German culture

³⁷⁸ Lowenthal writes in "Recollections of Theodor W. Adorno," "the relations of non-Jews and Jews in Germany - is something one should bear in mind in order to fully understand Adorno's personal history," p. 159; H. J. Krahel begins his article, "The Political Contradictions in Adorno's Critical Theory," with "Adorno's intellectual biography, even in its most aesthetic abstractions, is marked by the experience of Fascism," trans. Pat Murray and Ruth Heyderbrand, *Telos*, 21 (1974), 164.

³⁷⁹ P. 147.

'literally'. He provides fragmented insights into how the Nazis manipulated the fears and anxieties of the German proletariat to create the 'schizophrenic' disposition necessary for Germans to eventually achieve their own ends, including the Holocaust and self-destruction.

The Nazis turned Beethoven's people into Hitler's people by using conservative culture: to undermine the collective ego; to further the reliance on parental authorities; to disallow for any experiences of the age - the anxiety, loneliness, fear, and anguish of war-time society to be resolved. They created a tribal state where individuals competed for the love of authorities through self-sacrifice.

Through the means of a deceptively harmonious culture, they eroticised leading figures, touted charlatans as supermen, dictated behaviour, and even modes of dress so as to create the illusion of belonging, stability and collective power in an increasingly chaotic, unstable and alienating world.

CHAPTER FIVE

SCHOENBERG AND PROGRESS

Introduction

Although the section, "Schoenberg and Progress," portrays Schoenberg as the most socially responsible and enlightening composer of the modern era, ultimately, Schoenberg is but a representative of 'truly great' avant-garde artists such as Picasso, Kandinsky, Joyce, and Kafka.³⁸⁰ As in his discussion on Stravinsky, Adorno uses Schoenberg to discuss a tendency in art from about 1910 - 1940.

Through Schoenberg's works, Adorno shows how, historically, certain forms of progressive art opposed conservative art. When Adorno compares the works of Stravinsky and Schoenberg, in other ways, he compares fascist culture and 'utopian' culture. Read literally, Adorno's glorifying portrayal of Schoenberg seems uncritical. Read as an essay that deals with 'the progressive objective spirit above the head of Schoenberg and beyond his individual works' the section seems terse and incisive.

Part One provides a brief background on the rise of Expressionistic theatre and its socio-political implications during the 1880s-1920s. This becomes the basis from which I evaluate Adorno's discussion on the theatrical works of Schoenberg in Parts Two and Three. Part Four concentrates on Schoenberg's serial compositions. Part Five shows how Adorno uses the ideas of Nietzsche, Freud, Lukacs, Benjamin, Hegel, Jung, and Le Bon to justify his critique of avant-garde art.

³⁸⁰ Avant-garde artists Adorno champions briefly in *Philosophy of Modern Music* include Proust, Joyce, Picasso, Kafka, primarily literary and visual artists. He also praises Bartok and Janacek, but is more cautious towards Berg and Webern.

Part One

SCHOENBERG'S EARLY THEATRICAL WORKS
CONTEXTUALISED

I

Progressivists versus Conservatives—Schoenberg as Jew

As suggested previously, turn-of-the-century German society was divided into two basic groups, conservatives and progressivists.

Instead of furthering conservative values and German nationalism, or what Samuel and Hinton call the worship of the past, artists such as Strindberg, Hauptmann, and Schoenberg depicted "the suffering of the poor, of the artist, the loneliness and savagery of new industrialism."³⁸¹ Avant-garde art was the expression of fringe society and in many ways, it challenged conservative values.³⁸²

What turned Expressionists against traditionalists was not only a stylistic rejection but also the socio-political implications of conservative culture. Under Wilhelm, the music of Bach, Beethoven, and Wagner was used to reinforce social and racial distinctions. Art also failed to voice opposition to the impending war. "The new generation felt the dangers that threatened the age; and thus Expressionism became the herald of the coming catastrophe of war."³⁸³ As Adorno wrote of Expressionist art of this period, "German humanism was the most substantial counter-tendency against violent nationalism."³⁸⁴

³⁸¹ "Expressionism," *Grollier's Encyclopedia*: CD-ROM, 1985.

³⁸² Samuel and Hinton, pp. 1 - 15.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

³⁸⁴ National Socialism, p. 419.

Although marginalised initially, towards the end of and following World-War One, Expressionism in Germany began "to take on a leading role in the intellectual life of the nation."³⁸⁵ Works that shared similar social concerns began to surface in other countries, including Great Britain:

[Joyce, T.S. Eliot, and D.H. Lawrence] shared with the Expressionists the objection to the mechanised world, the idea of the unnaturalness of existing human relationships particularly in the matter of sex and of the senselessness of the modern social community.³⁸⁶

By the early 1920s, the influence of Expressionism had penetrated the new film industry. Actors and actresses compensated for verbal dialogue by hyperrealising emotions (evident in such classics as *The Cabinet of Dr. Kaligari* or *Metropolis*). The more Expressionism became a part of popular culture, the more it seemed to lose its initial humanitarian values. By 1924, the movement was more or less over. Expressionism, therefore, began as a movement that acted as a voice for the oppressed. By the mid, 1920s, it was taken over by the film industry and had been severed from its humanitarian roots.

³⁸⁵ Samuel and Hinton, p. 1.

³⁸⁶ P. 16.

II

SCHOENBERG: INSIDER AS OUTSIDER

A friend of Schiele, Kokoschka and Kandinsky, Schoenberg was perhaps the first German speaking composer to create an Expressionistic music. Like the Expressionistic paintings of Munch or Pechstein, Schoenberg sought to ground music in experience, beyond classical and romantic conventions, and to fathom an art in touch with the emotional *Zeitgeist*. His art "desired to discover all aspects of life and to make them - the ugly as well as the beautiful - the subject of his work."³⁸⁷ As Schoenberg wrote in 1912, around the time of composing *Erwartung* (1909) and *Die glückliche Hand* (1910-1913):

Every form which strives towards traditional effects is not completely free from acts of consciousness. That is a fact, even though art belongs to the unconscious. One should express oneself. Express oneself immediately! Not, however, one's taste, or one's education or understanding, knowledge or ability. None of these non-innate qualities. But the innate, instinctual ones. And every art of 'forming', every conscious forming, plays in some way with mathematics, or geometry, with the golden section and the like. . . . He, however, who has an ear for himself, who is able to perceive and understand with his own instinct . . . has no need for such crutches.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁷ Samuel and Hinton, p. 4.

³⁸⁸ Cited in Stanley Wickes' *Schoenberg* (London: Collins, 1965), p. 95.

Schoenberg's early atonal works were controversial. They were perceived by many conservatives as a challenge to the foundations of 'great German' music:

Vienna's musical past was legendary, and the city's inhabitants, who could claim such luminaries as Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, and Brahms in their collective ancestry, were almost all, regardless of social or economic class, self-appointed musical experts. This overwhelming interest in things musical was equalled only by the extreme conservatism of the public's tastes, and the combination proved inimical to any composer who dared to challenge the status quo.³⁸⁹

The Jewish composer faced potential humiliation each time his works were performed: "Hissing or whistling through the hollow end of keys" accompanied most early performances of his atonal works.³⁹⁰

Despite humiliation and financial hardships, Schoenberg remained stubbornly committed to his artistic convictions. In many ways, his compositions such as *Die glückliche Hand* (1910-1913) and *Erwartung* (1909) crystallise his own frustrations as a misunderstood artist. In other ways, they also crystallise the anxieties of the proletariat in pre-W.W.I German industrial society. Both works stood at the foreground of Expressionism.

In the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno uses Schoenberg's early modern music to trace the rise of humanitarian avant-garde art in the twentieth century. He concentrates on *Erwartung* and *Die glückliche Hand*

³⁸⁹ Jane Kallir, *Arnold Schoenberg's Vienna* (New York: Galerie St Etienne/Rizzoli, 1984), p. 22.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

because the themes they address, in varying degrees, apply to twentieth-century Western capitalist societies.

Part Two

ERWARTUNG

I

*Erwartung's plot analysed—Erwartung's radical musical language—
Audience impact—Parallels between Erwartung and Die glückliche Hand*

The plot of *Erwartung* (1909) was written by Marie Pappenheim and it dramatises the nightmarish search of a woman looking for her lover in a forest at night. The woman's monologue projects fear, anticipation, nostalgia, and guilt. In her confused state, the images of the night mirror her confusion. She eventually happens upon her lover only to find him dead.

Throughout the play, Schoenberg's music and his stage designs enhance the nightmarish images. Terror, jealousy, desire and other such emotions, together with switches between past and present in the monologue, add to the work's dream-like quality.

Schoenberg stated that he used this phantasmagorical setting because of the freedom it afforded to the composer and to the members of the audience:

... fantasy, in contradistinction to logic, which everyone should be able to follow, favours a lack of restraint and a freedom in the

manner of expression, permissible in our day only perhaps in dreams.³⁹¹

The work uses fantasy to project the psychological horrors of living in industrial society. It also 'frees' the imagination of individuals by encouraging them to psychoanalyse the work.

According to Adorno, *Erwartung* untaps the trauma of a lonely, angst-ridden individual in industrial society: "This loneliness is a common one, that of city dwellers who do not know anything from one another anymore."³⁹² Sectioned off in mass complexes, in urban environments, the individual searches for a sense of belonging. Her need for love and longing for a sense of community make her susceptible to cultural authorities. Schoenberg's work uncovers "the anxiety of the lonely person who seeks support in what is valid."³⁹³

Adorno claims Schoenberg alludes to this susceptibility when he paraphrases the melody, "Hark, Beloved" of Wagner's, *Tristan*. Despite her integration into modern society, ultimately, the woman's anxieties caused by profound isolation and dissociation eventually leads to insanity:

The confession of hatred and desire, jealousy and forgiveness, and, beyond all this, the whole symbolism of the unconscious is extracted from her; the music recalls its consoling right to protest only with the insanity of the heroine.³⁹⁴

³⁹¹ Cited in Wickes, 180.

³⁹² Die Einsamkeit ist eine gemeinsame: die der Städtebewohner, die nichts mehr voneinander wissen, p. 51.

³⁹³ Die Angst des Einsamen, der zitiert, sucht Halt beim Geltenden, p. 52.

³⁹⁴ Das Geständnis von Haß und Begierde, Eifersucht und Verzeihung und darüber hinaus die ganze Symbolik des Unbewußten wird ihr abgedrungen; und die

Adorno suggests that the music's anguish protests against Wilhelm's (and later Hitler's) official military-heroic culture, and the senselessness of the modern social community.

II

ADORNO'S EVALUATION

Through atonal fragments and no formal repetitions (at one point there are 426 bars without thematic repetition)³⁹⁵ Schoenberg adds to the ethereal quality created by the plot and stage setting. His sparse usage of woodwinds, brass, and percussion adds to the somnambulistic elements of the work. Through 'musical' fragmentation, Adorno claims that Schoenberg avoids the 'evil' realm of Romanticism':

. . . the timidity before doublings of colour, that banishes everything which does not depict the pure composition . . . a hatred against the bad richness of late Romantic coloration . . .³⁹⁶

Unlike official culture, *Erwartung* shatters the state-prescribed illusions of racial and cultural supremacy. Adorno states:

Musik erinnert sich ihres tröstenden Einspruchsrechts erst mit dem Wahnsinn der Heldenin, p. 47.

³⁹⁵ See in Alan Lessem's *Music and Text in the Works of Arnold Schoenberg* (Michigan: University of Michigan Research Press, 1978), pp. 74-95.

³⁹⁶ . . . die Scheu vor Farbenverdopplungen, die alles verbannt, was nicht rein die Komposition darstellt . . . den Haß gegen den schlechten Reichtum der spätromantischen Koloristik . . ., p. 86-87.

But it is also this very rebellion by which the great music which Germany has produced during this century, and of which the life-work of Arnold Schoenberg is representative, became definitely and radically antagonistic to the audience and to the whole sphere of commercialised musical life, of the official German *Musikleben*.³⁹⁷

Erwartung uncovers the neglected, suppressed, 'otherness' of human nature. By exposing the audience to angst-ridden music and images that somehow characterise their own state, *Erwartung* awakens the individual to the self-destructiveness of automated society. David Lidov indirectly expresses a similar position concerning Schoenberg's atonal music:

... fleeting and irrational harmonies have the form and tempo of free associations in the psychoanalytic sense, those subliminal glimpses of an unknown part of our mind which are available to us when we are in a condition to abandon the inhibitions of rational control.³⁹⁸

Like the 'horrifying' paintings of Munch, Schoenberg's *Erwartung* insists on terrifying, psychological experiences to counter the suppression of anxiety caused by living in industrial society:

³⁹⁷ National Socialism, p. 421.

³⁹⁸ "Technique and Signification in the Twelve-Tone Method," in *The Sign in Music and Literature*, ed. Wendy Steiner (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 86.

The sentimentality of inferior music reminds us in its distorted figure what superior music, at the edge of insanity is able to design in its form: reconciliation.³⁹⁹

Now, only socially revealing, shocking, experiential works of art can break through the mechanised mental and physical states of individuals; only rich and fragmented works can encourage individuals to exercise their creative faculties.

Like Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Erwartung's* fragmentary nature empowers the individual by encouraging them to 'complete' the text. Adorno claims that in an age where psycho-technology manipulates human reactions, art can ill-afford (like language itself) to dictate 'reality'. Art must engage the innate impulses of the individual so that s/he discovers 'truth': "The works of Schoenberg and Picasso, Joyce and Kafka, and even Proust offer unified support of this contention."⁴⁰⁰

When one examines Adorno's depiction of the woman in *Erwartung* and the role of the proletariat in the regimes of Wilhelm and Hitler several parallels emerge. Both Wilhelm and Hitler preyed upon the social chaos of their respective eras, on the weaknesses and susceptibility of the Germans by furthering dreams of social stability, and power.⁴⁰¹

Avant-garde artists such as Strindberg, Kirchner, Schoenberg, Webern, Berg later, Dix were among those German and Jews that forwarded racial symbiosis. They revealed the dangers of subscribing

³⁹⁹ Die Sentimentalität der unteren Musik erinnert in verzerrter Gestalt, was die obere Musik in der wahren am Rande des Wahnsinns gerade eben zu entwerfen vermag: Versöhnung, p. 122.

⁴⁰⁰ National Socialism, p. 120.

⁴⁰¹ See Hanson, Willis, Lidtke, and Milton.

blindly to the ideologies of the German state. They opposed military-heroic culture, and the horrific, debilitating impact industrial society had on individuals.

Adorno claims that *Die glückliche Hand* also exposes the debilitating impact of 'fascist' culture on the masses.

Part Three

DIE GLÜCKLICHE HAND'S PLOT

I

Die glückliche Hand's plot analysed—Radical musical qualities—Audience impact—Comparisons between the early works of Stravinsky and Schoenberg

Concerning the central character of *Die glückliche Hand*, Alan Lessem states:

It becomes evident that the subject of the drama is the suffering, even martyrdom, of one whom fate and perhaps history have decreed to be the bearer of a mission which he himself cannot fully understand.⁴⁰²

Written exclusively by Schoenberg, the opening scene begins with (the character) Man lying face-down with a mythical beast on his back.

⁴⁰² *Music and Text*, p. 104.

Its teeth are embedded in Man's neck. This introduction fades and the fragmented plot begins.

Man is a talented artisan who manages a jewellery/machine shop. He works for conservative bosses and crafts 'beautiful 'things. Although Man has strong creative urges, he is too insecure to explore and express them. Instead, he settles for flirtations with beauty and convention. While they serve as a lucrative compromise, in the end, compromise destroys him.

Adorno claims that in the final scene, Man's artistic impotence, a sign of his libidinal impotence, causes him to lose Woman to Herr. The craftsman is left abandoned.

In his analysis of the plot, Adorno concentrates on the scene where assembly-line workers meet Man:

... one files, one sits at the machine, one hammers." The hero enters the workshop. With the words "That can be done more simply," a symbolic criticism of the superfluous, he produces with one magical blow from a piece of gold, the piece of jewellery for the manufacturer of which the other workers need complicated procedures based on the division of labour.⁴⁰³

Because Man is gifted, he comes into conflict with the assembly-line workers. Man is able to forge something of beauty (a diadem) single-handedly while the workers fail to achieve, as a unit, the same elegant

⁴⁰³ "... Einer feilt, einer sitzt an der Maschine, einer hämmert." Der Held begibt sich in die Werkstatt. Mit den Worten: "Das kann man einfacher" - der symbolischen Kritik des Überflüssigen - verfertigt er mit einem Zauberschlag aus einem Stück Gold den Schmuck, zu dessen Herstellung die realistischen Arbeiter komplizierter arbeitsteiliger Verfahren bedürfen, p. 48.

results. Although threatened by Man's prowess, the workers refrain from attacking him.

Adorno states:

The hero, prophet of the New Objectivity, as a craftsman, should rescue the magic of the old means of production . . . He is the man of power . . . But the mythical animal of anxiety, which buries its teeth in the back of his neck, forces him to obedience. This impotent man accepts his impotence, doing to others that injustice which is done to him.⁴⁰⁴

In a metaphorical sense, prototypical Man is the 'conservative' artist who works for 'official' culture. He can be a Breker, Richard Strauss, Stravinsky, or any other potentially outstanding artist of a *kultur/culture* bureau - who sells their talents for fame without considering the consequences of their actions. Although Man initially gains financial security and prestige, he is but another worker in the machine. It is the 'mythical beast' that controls his work.

Adorno claims that new objectivist composers during (the rise of) fascism are insipid creatively, doing precisely that same injustice that was being done to them. As individuals, they were, in a sense, impotent; as civil servants, they were devastating. At one point in *Die glückliche Hand*, the chorus sings:

Once again you give yourself up to sirens of your thoughts,

⁴⁰⁴ Der Held, Prophet der neuen Sachlichkeit, soll als Handwerker den Zauber der alten Produktionsweise erretten . . . er ist doch der Mann der Gewalt . . . Das Fabeltier der Angst, das in seinen Nacken sich festbeißt, verhält ihn zum Gehorsam. Der Ohnmächtige findet sich ab mit seiner Ohnmacht und tut das Unrecht, das ihm angetan wird, den andern an, p. 50.

Thoughts that roam the Cosmos,
 That are unworldly but thirst for worldly fulfilment -
 You poor fool.
 Worldly fulfilment!
 You, who have the divine in you,
 and covet the worldly!
 And you cannot win out!
 You poor fool.⁴⁰⁵

But not only does Adorno concentrate on *Die glückliche Hand* because its themes resonate with German culture and society surrounding the two world-wars, but also because they resonate with the post-World War II Western context. In subscribing to the 'archetypal beast', many conservative composers of the twentieth-century congregate in the Nietzschean sense. In the process, they undermine others and their own creative potential.

II

MUSICAL EVALUATION

Musically, although the orchestra is large (it uses over 90 performers), the overall texture of *Die glückliche Hand* is transparent. Rarely does the orchestra play dramatic, overpowering, *tutti* passages. Instead, one hears isolated instruments playing fragmented pitch collections. The chorus of twelve whispers especially in earlier sections (mm. 1-22).

⁴⁰⁵ Arnold Schoenberg, "Die glückliche Hand," in *Arnold Schoenberg and Wassily Kandinsky: Letters, Pictures and Documents*, ed. Jelena Hahl-Koch (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p. 92.

Throughout the work, tempo fluctuates. Schoenberg uses formal repetitions primarily as a means to alert the listener to when Man reminisces. He uses *Sprechstimme* to add to the work's angst-ridden ambience.

Together, the fragmented music and plot create a 'case study'. Its musical and visual force-fields and constellations allow for various interpretations. To the perceptive audience, the force-fields and constellations encircle a central theme, the dehumanisation of the proletariat in (late) capitalist society: "What radical music recognises is the untransfigured suffering of humankind."⁴⁰⁶ By psychoanalysing Man or the woman in *Erwartung*, the audience psychoanalyses themselves. Man, the cog in the industrial machine, and Woman, the alienated, lonely urban individual represent, in varying degrees, the plight of those in the audience.

In a way, Adorno claims as does Willi Reich that Schoenberg writes himself 'out' of *Die glückliche Hand*, as one who, despite tenuous social and financial circumstances, does not submit to cultural administrations (1910-1913):

. . . the plot should make clear the basic idea of the drama: the tragedy of the creative man, gifted with 'green fingers' [the one] who has to pay for the happiness of creation by renouncing worldly fortune and happiness - and significantly enough, Schoenberg wrote this drama . . . when his worldly humiliation was at its most profound⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁶ Was die radikale Musik erkennt, ist das unverklärte Leid des Menschen, p. 47.

⁴⁰⁷ Willi Reich, *Schoenberg: A Critical Biography* (London: Longman, 1971), p. 83.

Through Schoenberg's composition, Adorno sides with artists such as Nolde, Beckmann, or Kokoschka who endured hostile criticism to forge art that revealed the horrifying impact of industrial, war-time society on the proletariat. These artists' critique of military culture, violent nationalism during Wilhelm's reign, would later configure as a critique of Hitler's fascist society.⁴⁰⁸ The next section contextualises Schoenberg's serial works within the context of the rise of fascism during the Weimar era.

Part Four

SERIAL COMPOSITIONS CONTEXTUALISED

I

Social context of serial compositions—Transition from Expressionism to Serialism—Rhythmic spatial and dynamic—Expressive qualities of serial music—Comparison between the transition and later music of Stravinsky and Schoenberg

As the war staggered to a close, Schoenberg continued to make a living through private teaching. Living in Vienna, he started the *Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen*, the Society for Private Musical Performances. Because of his domineering personality, influence, and fits of anger, it soon was known to disbelievers as 'The Vienna Schoenberg Society'. Concerts featured the works of Berg, Webern, Bartok, Satie and others.

⁴⁰⁸ Indeed, Adorno's intention in criticising neoclassical art is deeply informed by its function during the Third Reich. The anti-fascist artist, Otto Dix, used New Objectivity to satirise culture of the Third Reich. A few of Dix's paintings (ca. early 1930s) are of 'ideal' Aryan 'beauties'. They are essentially blonde-hair, blue-eyed mutants.

Although the society managed to re-establish links between German and other European composers after the war, as Malcolm Macdonald writes, Schoenberg's Jewishness increasingly became an issue:

The virulent criticism to which his musical activities were always subjected in the Vienna press began, even before the war, to take an undisguisedly anti-Semitic tone. The double paradox of being an apostate among Jews, but a Jew among Gentiles must have increased Schoenberg's sense of spiritual isolation, yet magnified his feelings of solidarity with his own race.⁴⁰⁹

Schoenberg was one of many Jews that were targeted during this period.

Jewish reaction to increasing cultural and social marginalism manifested itself in various ways. Alexander Ringer paraphrases Pinchas Rosenbluth (ca. 1920's):

Some chose to retreat into substitute realms, centred typically in 'Eros, play and poetry', others, loathe to acknowledge their ambivalent condition, loudly proclaimed their devotion to everything German. The more sensitive by contrast, succumbed in alarming numbers to the pervasive aura of doom, the ominous 'lull before the storm'.⁴¹⁰

Jews, the 'other', represented what conservatives feared. Through their social, psychological and artistic endeavours, Jews represented the antithesis to German conservatism. Freud, Marx, or Schoenberg posed

⁴⁰⁹ Schoenberg (London: Dent), p. 34.

⁴¹⁰ Alexander Ringer, *Arnold Schoenberg: The Composer as Jew* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), p. 17.

threats and seemed to disrespect German religious, artistic and intellectual traditions. Their stark, horrifying depictions of humanity were countered by defiant, if not, at times, naive traditional views.

By the mid-1920s, Schoenberg's works gradually began to gain recognition especially among progressivists outside of German speaking countries. Although he was appointed Professor of the Prussian Academy of Arts in 1926 in Berlin, Schoenberg experienced the rising tension between Germans and Jews, and suffered blatant verbal attacks often masked behind a critique of his 'decadent' art.⁴¹¹

Soon after Hitler came to power in 1933, Schoenberg resigned from his post.⁴¹² The president of the academy warned him that the Führer had resolved to "break the Jewish stranglehold on Western music."⁴¹³ If in the past, Schoenberg could withstand hostilities levelled against him, by 1933, it was clear that his resistance would prove futile. Macdonald writes, "he is reported to have said to the philosopher Adorno about this time, "today there are more important things than art."⁴¹⁴

A Christian for many years, Schoenberg reaffirmed his Jewish faith in the mid-1930s. Eager to pounce on Schoenberg, a leading Viennese newspaper wrote (on July 25, 1935): "Religion has once again been defiled."⁴¹⁵ In contrast, liberal scholar Franz Werfl (1934) wrote of Schoenberg and his music:

⁴¹¹ MacDonald, p. 34.

⁴¹² Schoenberg along with many great artists resigned from the posts. Otto Dix was one of them. Although he remained in Germany during the 1930s, Dix quietly opposed the regime. He was arrested for planning to assassinate Hitler during the late 1930s but was later released.

⁴¹³ MacDonald, p. 35.

⁴¹⁴ P. 35.

⁴¹⁵ Cited in MacDonald, p. 34.

In Arnold Schoenberg's personality and art, we revere above all the unyielding search for the Absolute, a will-power and an ideal for perfection which his increasingly aimless and senseless contemporaries are hardly able to grasp any longer. . . . Arnold Schoenberg endeavours, through the sanctification of the work of art, i.e., through the exclusion of all impure secondary goals (effect, success, accessibility) to draw the Absolute into the world of sound.⁴¹⁶

II

DODECAPHONIC WORKS

Schoenberg's style changed from atonality to serialism around 1922.⁴¹⁷ Adorno claims that the reason for this change had to do ultimately with the composer's power to be rebarbative towards destructive authorities. Despite its illuminating qualities, several factors impeded the rebellious elements of Schoenberg's atonality. It was, allegedly, a magnificent, historical failure. In spite of the composer's intention to be 'free' musically, several Romantic conventions persisted including the emphasis on harmonic organisation over contrapuntal organisation.

Philosophically, atonality also failed 'magnificently'. It aspired to intensified subjectivity. Yet, to achieve the ideal, to be absolutely subjective in the Nietzschean sense, meant rendering music socially

⁴¹⁶ Cited in Ringer, p. 23.

⁴¹⁷ Schoenberg told Josef Rufer in 1922: "I have discovered something which will guarantee the supremacy of German music for the next hundred years." Cited in H. H. Stuckenschmidt's *Arnold Schoenberg* (London: Calder, 1959), p. 24. Evidence of a mature use of the technique first appears in *Five Piano Pieces*, Op. 23, published in 1924.

indifferent. As Adorno argues, Schoenberg came to the realisation that: "No artist is able to speak, out of himself, against the contradiction of an unleashed art within a bound society. Even this brings him close to despair."⁴¹⁸ Art must be socially accountable.

Another element that failed in his atonal music was its case-study tendencies. While compositions such as *Erwartung* and *Die glückliche Hand* maintained a relatively 'objective' quality in depicting the plight of the oppressed, they did not level blows against authorities directly.

According to Adorno dodecaphony improves upon the radical elements of atonality. Twelve-tone music rebels forcefully against capitalist society. Schoenberg's music "turns into an allegory of the world against which it rebels."⁴¹⁹ Instead of rebelling against coopted musical tradition through an intuitive language as in atonality, twelve-tone music side-steps historical praxis altogether by 'objectivising' musical technique:

. . . then the twelve-tone technique, declining within itself and endlessly within its history, less static, seems nearer to that ideal than Spengler ever was, but also with which Schoenberg [initially] let pass.⁴²⁰

His system of 'shop-keeper mathematics', itself a metaphor of a guild-based society, ironically, returns art to the realm of nature, to the disposal of the composer's natural, instinctual and creative world. "The conscious

⁴¹⁸ Kein Künstler vermag es, von sich aus den Widerspruch der entfesselten Kunst zur gefesselten Gesellschaft zu widersprechen, und auch daran muß er fast verzweifeln, p. 102.

⁴¹⁹ . . . ins Gleichnis der Welt verkehrt, gegen die sie sich auflehnt, p. 108.

⁴²⁰ . . . dann scheint die in sich rückläufige Zwölftontechnik, unendlich in ihrer geschichtslosen Statik, jenem Ideal näher, als jemals Spengler, aber auch Schönberg sich beikommen ließ, p. 66.

disposal (availability) of nature material is . . . : the emancipation of man over musical purpose.⁴²¹

The musical artist, like never before, is able to explore 'taboo' notes and rhythms; s/he is 'free' to create music anew. Schoenberg's dodecaphonic technique enhances the potential for expressive-dynamic and rhythmic-spatial expression:

But with this, the melodic relationship is relegated to a non-melodic means; it is that of rhythm which became independent. The row is unspecific through its omnipresence. Thus, the melodic specification falls towards established and characteristically rhythmic figures. Certain and constantly recurring rhythmic configurations take over the role of themes.⁴²²

Rhythmical-spatial qualities become a primary means of transforming 'objective' pitch collections into expressive musical fragments: "the tritone, the major seventh, and also all those intervals beyond the octave gain equal rights, but at the price of being placed upon the same level as the older intervals."⁴²³

Freedom to organise pitches and rhythms beyond conventions opens up a floodgate of emotional possibilities. Dodecaphony allows for

⁴²¹ Die bewusste Verfügung übers Naturmaterial ist . . . : die Emanzipation des Menschen vom musikalischen Zwecke, p. 66.

⁴²² Damit wird aber der melodische Zusammenhang auf ein außer-melodisches Mittel verwiesen. Es ist das der verselbständigten Rhythmik. Die Reihe ist unspezifisch durch ihre Allgegenwart. So fällt die melodische Spezifikation an festgehaltene und charakteristische rhythmische Gestalten. Bestimmte stets wiederkehrende rhythmische Konfigurationen übernehmen die Rolle der Themen, p. 74.

⁴²³ . . . dem Tritonus, der großen Septime und auch all den Intervallen, die die Oktave überschritten, gleiches Recht geworden, aber um den Preis, daß sie zusammen mit den alten nivelliert sind, p. 76.

intensified emotional crystallisations, yet can be fragmented enough to require the input of the listener.

In later compositions such as the *Survivor from Warsaw* (1946), freedom takes over to the point where even the metaphor of the guild-based system crumbles:

It was never in any way Schoenberg's intention that the rows as such - either thematically or as something reminiscent of key - should be audible; they were rather intended to effect a latent organisation which in fact, in the detailed works of his later years, proves itself magnificently as 'putty'.⁴²⁴

Through its equality of tones and inclusion of the taboo sounds, "every tone is as much a scale-tone as any other."⁴²⁵ Dodecaphony becomes a system of musical inclusion rather than exclusion. Adorno interprets this as a metaphor of social symbiosis rather than social exclusivity.

Although the Frankfurt scholar doesn't focus on specific compositions, he does clarify certain features of Schoenberg's dodecaphonic music. It too is cathartic.

To a greater degree than in his atonal works, by interpreting and completing his dodecaphonic works, the listener exercises their innate, neglected creative tendencies. This frees the individual. Along with the other great avant-gardists' works, his music shatters Le Bonian mob-like behaviour. As the Frankfurt scholar wrote in 1932, unlike kitsch culture which functions by:

⁴²⁴ *Prisms*, p. 90.

⁴²⁵ Jeder Ton ist so gut Reihenton wie jeder andere, p. 96.

transferring the individual, establishing him as a norm. . . [Schoenberg's dodecaphonic music] uncovers his misery and suffering which are concealed by psychological as well as musical conventions . . . all the while, administering fatal blows to the authorities.⁴²⁶

At the latent level, his music's painful emotional content captures the instability, anxieties and loneliness of Weimar society:

The integral technique of composition arose neither within the thought of the integral state nor in its eradication. It is, however, a search to remain in the face of reality and to absorb that panic-stricken anxiety to which the integral state corresponded.⁴²⁷

Like the works of Kraus and Picasso, Schoenberg's fragmented dodecaphonic work encourages creative self-reliance. Innate emotional and 'spiritual' experiences become essential to life itself. Exercising one's individuality becomes a means to avoid falling into the tribal conservatism of the rising fascists.⁴²⁸

Without exercising their innate impulses, tendencies or humanitarian instincts, the German proletariat's moral and social values increasingly became the construct of bureaucracies. Their tolerance for

⁴²⁶ On the Social Situation of Music, p. 129; 134-135.

⁴²⁷ Die integrale Technik der Komposition ist weder im Gedanken an den integralen Staat noch in dem an seine Aufhebung entstanden. Aber sie ist ein Versuch, der Wirklichkeit standzuhalten und jene panische Angst zu absorbieren, welcher der integrale Staat entsprach, p. 125.

⁴²⁸ Adorno writes in "Music and Technique" concerning the concept of the *Zeitgeist*, "To sermonize about the spirit in music is almost as reactionary as it was 50 years ago when an opponent of Vassily Kandinsky's *Concerning The Spiritual in Art* spoke in praise of that which brought 'sensual' pleasure [through beauty]. Spirit - culture in general - is lost as soon as it makes reference only to itself" [Adorno refers in the latter phrase to aleatory music], p. 83.

violence and injustice was conditioned by the manner in which the bureaucracy painted such actions. During the 1940s, it is possible that Adorno believed that responsible culture could have shattered the autocratic state Hitler had managed to create. Like Benjamin - and Hitler - it is possible that he believed that shocking, responsible culture could have stirred up feeling and emotions among Germans that would have undermined the efforts of the Nazis.

Avant-garde culture during the Weimar era and the early part of the Third Reich sought to shock Germans from their tribalistic, pathological, sado-masochistic state: "... that which the feebleness and impotence of the individual soul seemed to express testifies to what has been inflicted on mankind in those who represent the whole as its victims."⁴²⁹ With the eradication of all forms of degenerate culture, Hitler silenced protests against the inhumanity practised against insiders and outsiders.

During the period in which "Schoenberg and Progress" was written (ca. 1940 - 1944), the other issues of inclusion versus exclusion, being civilised or being a primitive, a progressivist or a conservative, an insider or an outsider, all applied in varying degrees to the fate of the Jews - to their survival or extinction.

⁴²⁹ *Prisms*, p. 172.

III

SCHOENBERG AND STRAVINSKY

Adorno claims at the literal level that both Stravinsky and Schoenberg deal with the division of labour. But whereas Schoenberg exposes its devastating mechanisation of individuals, Stravinsky endorses it:

The division of labour which is denounced as ideology by Schoenberg's *Die glückliche Hand* is slyly paid tribute by Stravinsky . . . As a cure for the division of labour, Stravinsky suggests driving it to an extreme, and thus, playing a trick on culture based upon such a division.⁴³⁰

Both Stravinsky and Schoenberg shock audiences by revealing the horrors of modern industrial society. But whereas Stravinsky encourages them to rely upon state monopoly capitalists for guidance, Schoenberg encourages catharsis and internal resistance:

In *Erwartung* . . . [she] gesticulates like a human being gripped by wild anxiety. The man [in the audience] succeeds, psychologically speaking, in his anticipation of anxiety: while shock overcomes him, and dissociates the continuous duration of traditional style, he retains his self-control. He remains the subject and is therefore able to subject his constant life above the consequence of shock experiences which he heroically reshapes as elements of his own

⁴³⁰ Der Arbeitsteilung, wie sie in der Ideologie von Schönbergs "Glücklicher Hand" denunziert wird, entrichtet Stravinsky listig den Tribut . . . Als Kur gegen die Arbeitsteilung schlägt er vor, sie auf die Spitze zu treiben und damit der arbeitsteiligen Kultur ein Schnippchen zu schlagen, p. 131-132.

language. In Stravinsky, [in *The Rite of Spring*] there is neither the anticipation of anxiety nor the resisting ego . . . But it is accepted that the shocks can't be dedicated [to the anticipation of anxiety or the resisting ego] . . . The destruction of the subject through shock is transformed in the aesthetic complexion as the victory of the subject, and at the same time as [the subject's] overcoming through the being- in-itself.⁴³¹

Schoenberg helps the listener to come to terms with his neglected self:

In Schoenberg, everything is based upon that lonely subjectivity which withdraws into itself. The entire third part of *Pierrot* designs a 'voyage home' to a glassy no-man's-land in whose crystalline-lifeless air the seemingly transcendent subject, liberated from the entanglements of the empirical, finds himself again on an imaginary plane . . . Such pathos is totally alien to Stravinsky's *Petrouchka*.⁴³²

At the symbolic level, Adorno claims that by creating works that buy into the capitalistic system, fascist composers commit acts of

⁴³¹ In der "Erwartung" . . . gestikuliert sie gleichsam wie ein von wilder Angst ergriffener Mensch. Diesem aber gelingt, psychologisch gesprochen, die Angstbereitschaft: während der Schock ihn durchfährt und die kontinuierliche Dauer alten Stiles dissoziiert, bleibt er seiner selbst mächtig, Subjekt, und vermag daher noch die Folge der Schockerlebnisse seinem standhaften Leben zu unterwerfen, heroisch sie zu Elementen der eigenen Sprache umzuformen. Bei Strawinsky gibt es weder Angstbereitschaft noch widerstehendes Ich, sondern es wird hingenommen, daß die Schocks nicht sich zueignen lassen. . . die Vernichtung des Subjekts durch den Schock wird in der ästhetischen Komplexion als Sieg des Subjekts und zugleich als dessen Überwindung durch das an sich Seiende verklärt, p. 145.

⁴³² Bei Schönberg ist alles auf die sich in sich selber zurücknehmende, einsame Subjektivität gestellt. Der ganze dritte Teil entwirft eine "Heimfahrt" in ein gläsernes Niemandsland, in dessen kristallisch-lebensloser Luft das gleichsam transzendente Subjekt, befreit von den Verstrickungen des Empirischen, auf imaginärer Ebene sich wiederfindet. . . Solches Pathos ist Strawinskys Petruschka ganz fremd, p. 133.

barbarism as part of their jobs. Showing no resistance to the dictates of state capitalist employers, they suppress their individualistic tendencies in order to carry out orders efficiently.

In contrast, salient avant-garde art encourages a rebellion by revealing the levelling down of individuality as a form of dehumanisation; it encourages individuals to oppose destructive behaviour.

Certain parallels occur even when the two composers change style. Whereas in Stravinsky's music his fascist tendencies become evident, in Schoenberg's music, his allegedly anti-fascist, even utopian ideas become clear:

The transformation of the vehicles of atonal expression into the twelve-tone stock happened in Schoenberg out of compositional gravity alone. Therefore, it has changed decisively either the musical language or the essence of individual compositions. Nothing like this is evident in Stravinsky. However, his regression to tonality gradually becomes less unhesitating, until the provocatively false is mellowed to the point where it is no more than a spice within the work - as, for example, the chorale contained in *L'histoire du Soldat*. If there is any essential change, however, it is not the musical, but the literary aspect: the claim, one could almost say, the ideology . . . All of a sudden, music wishes to be taken literally. It is the idolatrously fixed grimace which is revered as an image of the gods.⁴³³

⁴³³ Der Umschlag der atonalen Ausdrucksträger in den Zwölftonvorrat geschah bei Schönberg aus der kompositorischen Schwerkraft selber und hat darum die Musiksprache sowohl wie das Wesen der einzelnen Kompositionen entscheidend verändert. Nichts davon bei Strawinsky. Zwar wird allmählich der Rückgriff auf die Tonalität bedenkenloser, bis das provokativ Falsche, wie es etwa der Choral der *Histoire*

Like Casella and Strauss, Stravinsky's neoclassic works reveal his undisguised allegiance to fascism. By extension, like Kokoschka (ca. late 1930s), Beckmann and Picasso, Schoenberg's works reveal a resistance to fascism.

In another sense, Adorno overstates the idealism in Schoenberg's music to pit his view of Marxist utopianism against fascism.

In Stravinsky's music, whereas there are 'taboo' notes, i.e., 'untouchables', in Schoenberg's music all notes, individuals, are 'equal'. Instead of a dominating power, a central key, a hierarchical social system, each individual is given equal right. Instead of emotional objectivity - self-denial, there is both objectivity and subjectivity, social order and chaos.

In Stravinsky's music, whereas there are conventional rhythmic patterns, as in the rhythm of automated human existence in capitalist society, Schoenberg's rhythms are 'free' and unrestricted. It is the immanent fundamental Marxist principle of equality and freedom that gives Schoenberg's music its superiority over capitalistic art.

Even during exile, Adorno claims that Schoenberg continues to fight against the reifying nature of kitsch culture. The Jewish composer continues to create responsible, humane music. Despite being on the fringes, he remains committed to his artistic vision. "He objectively preserves therein the greater philosophical truth, self-motivated as the free attempt at the reconstruction of responsibility."⁴³⁴ Unlike artists who

du Soldat enthielt, zur Würze sich sänftigt, wesentlich aber ändert sich nicht die Musik sondern ein Literarisches; der Anspruch, fast ließe sich sagen: die Ideologie. Mit einem Mal will sie à la lettre genommen werden. Es ist die götzenhaft fixierte Grimasse, als Götterbild verehrt, p. 187-188.

⁴³⁴ Gerade objektiv bewahrt er darin die größere philosophische Wahrheit als der freiweg, auf eigene Faust unternommene Versuch der Rekonstruktion von Verbindlichkeit, p. 193.

write for the American culture industry, Schoenberg, but also artists such as Webern and Picasso, carry on in their revolutionary aesthetic works, the experiential, humanitarian tradition:

His dark drive derives from the certainty that nothing in art is binding but that which can be filled totally by the historical state of consciousness which determines its own substance by his 'experience' in the emphatic sense.⁴³⁵

As during the early years of Expressionism, Schoenberg hopes that in some way, his subjective, concentrated art derives its universality from its power to enlighten and to elicit repressed, angst-ridden emotions:

He is guided by the desperate hope that such a window-less movement of the spirit, so to speak [*gewissermaßen*], can through the force of its own logic, transcend every private concern from which it proceeds, and which reproaches those who reveal themselves as being unable to match such an objective logic of the matter.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁵ Sein dunkler Drang lebt von der Gewißheit, daß nichts an Kunst verbindlich gerät, als was vom historischen Stande des Bewußtseins, der dessen eigene Substanz ausmacht, von seiner "Erfahrung" im emphatischen Sinn, ganz gefüllt werden kann, p. 193.

⁴³⁶ Er wird geleitet von der verzweifelten Hoffnung, daß solche gewissermaßen fensterlose Bewegung des Geistes aus der Gewalt ihrer eigenen Logik jenes Private übersteige, von dem sie ausgeht und das eben jene ihr vorhalten, welche solcher objektiven Logik der Sache nicht gewachsen sich zeigen, pp. 193-194.

Stravinsky writes for Broadway and mainstream concert halls, venues that perpetuate the facade of 'democracy'.⁴³⁷ Stravinsky now sides with the Americans:

The pretended positivity of late Stravinsky affirms that his type of negativity - which contradicted the subject and justified every kind of pressure - was in itself positive and stood in alliance with stronger battalions.⁴³⁸

As in Hitler's Germany, Stravinsky's 'disneyfied' American concert music of the 1940s acts as a way of distinguishing particular racial groups and 'classes', insiders and outsiders, Blacks and Whites, rich and poor, and as a way of censoring emotions or dissociating individuals from their natural reactions to the prevalent social horrors:

The moment of appeasement - harmoniousness - the displacement of [the] terrifying in art, the aesthetic heritage of magical practice, against which all Expressionism up to Schoenberg's revolutionary works protested, this harmoniousness triumphs in Stravinsky's disdainful and cutting tone as the herald of the Iron Age.⁴³⁹

⁴³⁷ Hohendahl writes, "Adorno and Horkheimer followed Pollock's interpretation that state capitalism in Nazi Germany reversed the traditional causal connection between the political system and the economy . . . an analysis of American society included, explicitly or implicitly, an analysis of modern Germany, since both the political system of the National Socialists and the organization of culture in North America were seen as aspects of the same historical dialectic of [economic] reason" p. 90.

⁴³⁸ Die angedrehte Positivität des späten Strawinsky besagt, daß seine Art von Negativität, die dem Subjekt widerfuhr und jeglichem Druck rechtgab, selber schon positiv war und es mit den stärkeren Bataillonen hielt, p. 190.

⁴³⁹ Jenes Moment des Begütigenden, Harmonistischen, der Versetzung von Gefürchtetem in Kunst, das ästhetische Erbe der magischen Praxis, gegen das aller Expressionismus bis zu Schönbergs revolutionären Werken aufbegehrte - dies Harmonistische triumphiert, als Bote des eisernen Zeitalters, in Strawinskys schnödem und schneidendem Ton, p. 156.

Adorno treats Stravinsky as a member of a group of artists that paint social dissonance during World-War II as harmonious or that work as 'tune-smiths' for the film industry. Whereas neoclassical composers create works that anaesthetise emotional reactions, avant-garde artists create works that elicit natural reactions; whereas neoclassical composers write for dictatorial bodies, avant-garde artists write primarily for the proletariat; whereas neoclassical composers are 'weak', avant-garde artists are strong, able to withstand the pressures of oppressive cultural administrations to realise their artistic convictions.⁴⁴⁰

By suppressing, destroying or murdering the creators of humanitarian avant-garde art, Wilhelm, and later, Hitler suppressed the great humanitarian legacy in German culture. Their destruction, Adorno claims, has created a vacuum in art which has had a devastating impact on post-World-War II Western culture. This will be the focus of Chapter Six.

IV

SUBOTNIK'S CRITIQUE OF ADORNO

Many eminent musicologists have questioned why Adorno portrays Schoenberg and Stravinsky in such a radical manner.⁴⁴¹ Among the most

⁴⁴⁰ Schoenberg was disgusted by the high cost of tickets for concerts in America. He tried to keep the cost of his own concerts down so poorer individuals could attend. See in Jane Kallir's *German Expressionism*.

⁴⁴¹ Wes Blomster's "'Adorno and Beyond.'" *Telos* 27 (1978): 80-112 compends several compelling criticisms levelled against Adorno. They range from personal attributions of prejudices against popular culture to his views on society. Leo Lowenthal's chapter entitled "Adorno and his Critics" in *Critical Theory and Frankfurt School Theorists* responds to many of these charges. Because my research centres on a particular period in Adorno's scholarship. Any conclusions that I may make beyond its scope would prove

challenging have been Rose Rosengard Subotnik's ideas in "Why Is Adorno's Criticism the Way It Is?"⁴⁴² Subotnik suggests that Adorno's individualistic criticism stems from his own Romantic perception of the critic - as one who completes the object of art; Adorno's dialectic portrayal of Stravinsky and Schoenberg also stems from his own tendencies as a structuralist. It is possible, however, that Subotnik's claims mirror her own Anglo-American structuralist approach rather than the European humanist tradition to which Adorno's writing is indebted.

Subotnik fails to confront Adorno's Jewish background (and perhaps her own), and the meaning 'individuality' held for many progressive artists and intellectuals during the rise of German fascism. An insistence on subjectivity brought with it the feeble hope that the German people might become aware of the destructive collectivity of the totalitarian regime.

Adorno's critique of Stravinsky and Schoenberg seems to present a structural opposition in the literal sense. This is intentional. The contrast is so literally schematic that it problematises the whole structural discourse. His shockingly reified claims aim to question the credibility of structural discourse as a whole. Paradoxically, Adorno's structural critique is anti-structural. As Alastair Williams observes:

It would seem . . . that given the emphasis on heterogeneous fragments which is so characteristic of Adorno's thought in general, there is a stronger link with poststructuralist tendencies,

inconclusive. Subotnik's conclusions are polemical to mine and thus, behooves commentary.

⁴⁴² *Developing Variations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), pp. 42-56.

particularly those of Derrida, for whom any type of stable structure, including rigidly historical or ahistorical models, becomes problematic.⁴⁴³

In the *Philosophy of Modern Music* he suggests to the reader how the Nazis turned Beethoven's music into Hitler's music, how the works of Wagner and Stravinsky were used to further fascist ideology, and how artists such as Schoenberg, Picasso, Kandinsky and others attempted to resist the increasing subjugation of the masses through an insistence on individuality, experience, and self-assertion.

During the years in which the Jewish scholar wrote this book, the years surrounding the Holocaust, a critique of fascism in all its guises was his main focus. The social function of (musical) culture to further or resist 'fascism' seemed far more crucial to Adorno than discussions dedicated solely to the stylistic tendencies. But although Adorno's observations are often 'chaotic' and fragmented, his insights rely on the readers' own experiences and rationality to 'complete' them.

⁴⁴³ "Music as Immanent Critique: Stasis and Development in the Music of Ligeti," *Music and the Politics of Culture*, ed. Christopher Norris (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1989), p. 197. Whether or not Adorno's intentionally hostile approach towards empirical and rational investigations became reified in later years is difficult to judge in light of the scope of this thesis. Suffice to say that although some scholars chide him for such prejudices, his scholarship sometimes reveals the opposite. During the same period in which he wrote the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, for instance, Adorno relies extensively on empirical data. Most of his observations in *The Authoritarian Personality* (1949) are derived from empirical research and structural models. In response to the accusation of being prejudiced towards empiricism, Adorno later wrote:

I feel misunderstood when the publications I have written on the sociology of music since I returned from my emigration [1949] are regarded as opposed to empirical research. I would like to emphasise that not only do I regard these methods as important within their area but appropriate as well. The entire production of so-called mass media is *a priori*, ideally suited to empirical research.

Impromptus (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1967), p. 95. Passage translated by David Marinelli. See Paddison's well-documented chapter, "Critical Reflections on Adorno," in *Adorno, Modernism and Mass Culture* for an introduction to the most contentious criticisms levelled against the Frankfurt scholar in recent years.

Part Five

SOCIO-CULTURAL ISSUES AND DEBATES

I

Adorno and Lukacs: Schoenberg's domination of nature—Adorno and Benjamin: Schoenberg's auratic and playful music—Adorno and Hegel: Subjective music as enlightenment music—Adorno and Hegel: The Zeitgeist in Schoenberg's music—Adorno and Nietzsche: Schoenberg's responsible, superhuman music—Freud and Adorno: cathartic music—Schoenberg's personality through his music—Adorno and Le Bon: Schoenberg's individualistic music—Adorno and Jung—Archetypes and the unconscious

Adorno challenges Benjamin's generalised view that all avant-garde art belongs to the bourgeois when he states:

Benjamin's concept of the 'auratic' work of art corresponds to a large extent with that of the hermetic work. The aura is the unbroken contact of the parts with the whole, which constitutes the hermetic work of art.⁴⁴⁴

By the hermetic work, Adorno refers to Dadaists, aleatory and super-serial composers: "The hermetic work of art belongs to the bourgeois, the mechanical works belongs to fascism, and the fragmentary work, in its state of perfect negativity, belongs to utopia."⁴⁴⁵ Schoenberg's angst-

⁴⁴⁴ Benjamins Begriff des "auratischen" Kunstwerks kommt weithin mit dem des geschlossenen überein. Die Aura ist die undurchbrochene Fühlung der Teile mit dem Ganzen, welche das geschlossene Kunstwerk konstituiert, p. 119.

⁴⁴⁵ Das geschlossene Kunstwerk ist das bürgerliche, das mechanische gehört dem Faschismus an, das fragmentarische meint im Stande der vollkommenen Negativität die Utopia, p. 120.

ridden, fragmentary dodecaphonic music, however, does what Benjamin claims the realism of film could do. It ends the fascist/bourgeois legacy of traditional music through its numerical rules.

In a period when the collective sterilisation of experience became the norm, avant-garde culture had no recourse but to insist on a revolutionary aura. Socially responsible artists such as Schiele and Schoenberg had no recourse, in a sense, but to return to a natural realm where the proletariat could experience their own uniqueness and sensuality, and thus, break from the social mechanisation of industrial society.

Adorno opposes Lukacs' concept of the 'domination of nature' through his depiction of the music of Schoenberg. The composer dominates musical nature by not falling into the trap of conventions:

. . . In this is the law according to which market-society blindly reproduces itself, over the heads of humans. It includes the continuing growth of the power of the leaders over the others.⁴⁴⁶

The rules of dodecaphony are inhumane, mechanical, like the dynamo of capitalist society. But through them, Schoenberg's compositions become a subjective rebellion against the overpowering system. Schoenberg returns art to the sphere of the natural:

Music's pseudomorphism with painting [i.e., the element of representation in music] capitulates before the superior power of

⁴⁴⁶ In jener erscheint das Gesetz, nach welchem die Tauschgesellschaft blind, über den Köpfen der Menschen sich reproduziert. Es schließt das stete Anwachsen der Macht der Verfügenden über die anderen ein, p. 49.

rational technology in that very sphere of art which had its essence in protest against such domination, and which nevertheless fell towards the progressive rational domination of nature.⁴⁴⁷

Whereas Lukacs considers most avant-garde artists to be 'immature and confused', and prefers 'direct communication', a position that would align him more towards neoclassic music, Adorno reveals such a position to be dangerous. Capitalists use direct communication to "manipulate their listeners with the most modern methods of psycho-technology and propaganda."⁴⁴⁸

In an ironic twist of Lukacs' concept of second nature, Adorno claims that it is neoclassical music, communicative and objective music that is 'unnatural', and Schoenberg's artificially constructed dodecaphonic music that is natural: "The material regresses to mere nature, back to physical tone relationships, and it is precisely this regression which constitutes the drive towards nature in twelve-tone music."⁴⁴⁹ In modern society neoclassical music is retrospective, nostalgic, and out-of-touch with the collective experiences of the now. "For in twelve-tone-technique he blindly transcends his rationality as an objective of events, over the will of the subjects, which in the end, consummates as irrationality."⁴⁵⁰ By

⁴⁴⁷ Die Pseudomorphose der Musik an die malerische Technik kapituliert vor der Übermacht rationaler Technologie in eben jener Kunstsphäre, die ihr Wesen am Einspruch gegen solche Übermacht hatte und die doch selber der fortschreitenden rationalen Naturbeherrschung zuviel, p. 175.

⁴⁴⁸ Sie bearbeiten ihre Zuhörer mit jüngsten Methoden der Psychotechnik und Propaganda . . . , p. 109.

⁴⁴⁹ So fällt das Material in bloße Natur, in physikalische Tonbeziehungen zurück, und es ist dieser Rückfall zumal, der die Zwölftonmusik dem Naturzwang unterwirft, p. 85.

⁴⁵⁰ Denn in der Zwölftontechnik setzt seine Vernunft, als Objektive der Ereignisse, blind, über den Willen der Subjekte hinweg und damit endlich als Unvernunft sich durch, p. 113.

causing others to experience the 'now', this art, at its most effective, offers a path to enlightenment.

In his depiction of avant-garde culture, Adorno also relies extensively on Le Bon's idea of group behaviour. In fascist society, group behaviour became a way in which individuals defined themselves, often through images and ideologies to which they subscribed. But 'tribal' behaviour with its sense of 'belonging' failed to reach the core of loneliness and insecurity in German society. Although it provided a sense of invincibility, it reduced the individual to an automaton. The girl in *Erwartung*, although she resists the 'bad company of progressivists', goes insane because modern society undermines her ego, her judgement, her natural individualistic tendencies. As Adorno writes:

We should bear in mind that totalitarianism regards the masses not as self-determining human beings who rationally decide their own fate and are therefore to be addressed as rational subjects, but that it treats them as mere objects of administrative measures who are taught, above all, to be self-effacing and to obey orders.⁴⁵¹

Avant-garde culture opposed Wilhelm's and later Hitler's crowd ideal of an absolutely obedient mass. Fragmented works aimed to shatter passive participation, automated reactions, and motor-reflex responses. Avant-garde art warred against fascism by breaking down the dynamics between prestigious leaders and followers. Avant-garde art turned the follower into a leader by forcing them to participate in the completion of the work.

⁴⁵¹ *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 164.

Following Hegel, Adorno claims that salient avant-garde art, "aligns itself, so to speak, with the world-spirit, not world reason. . . ." ⁴⁵² Both Schoenberg and Beethoven provide aesthetic insights into their respective times through subjective art. Both further emotional 'freedom'. In the same way that Beethoven's 'subjective' classical music was in part a reaction to the feudal system, Schoenberg's tonal and dodecaphonic musics rebels against this century's reversion to despotic systems.

But although Schoenberg's 'subjective' music is 'objective', it is also 'complete' in the Hegelian sense. His dodecaphony is based on rational, objective mathematical principles. Yet, his self-imposition gives the object its irrational, subjective, natural qualities.

During the rise of fascism, avant-garde works elicited uncivilised emotions - chaotic, irrational, shocking feelings. Yet, in the period leading up to the deceptively 'harmonious' Nazi society, such angst-ridden experiences were true to the times. Irrational, chaotic, angst-ridden art was 'progressive'.

Whereas Nietzsche believed in living each instant of life beyond terror and pity, Adorno believed that art is intertwined with society and its possibilities. ⁴⁵³ One cannot escape society, except through isolation, which was to Adorno, a form of self-destruction. Art must be revolutionary against social injustices.

The choice of being socially 'responsible' or 'irresponsible' is stressed in Adorno's presentation of avant-garde and kitsch music. Unlike kitsch art which satiates, Schoenberg's dodecaphonic works cause catharsis in those who are willing to abandon themselves to the music.

⁴⁵² . . . sich gewissermaßen dem Weltgeist verschreibt, der nicht der Weltvernunft ist. . . , p. 108.

⁴⁵³ Rose, p. 26.

Although it is subjective in the Nietzschean sense, and rebellious against the pseudo-moral conventions of the time, his music is also socially answerable.

Adorno agrees with Nietzsche, however, that individuals must revolt against the manipulative pseudo-moral constructs of their given society. They must live beyond terror and pity. During the Weimar era and the Third Reich, despite political, social and artistic oppression, artists such as Webern, Schoenberg, Beckmann, Kirchner and others, continued steadfastly to pursue their individualistic, socially enlightening ideas. In contrast, talented artists such as Casella, Malipiero, Breker and others grouped together, sacrificed artistic integrity, or were too weak to resist the fortunes and prestige offered by the fascist bureau.

The suffering endured by avant-garde artists echoes Nietzsche's claim that "the experience of suffering has a true purpose in reality."⁴⁵⁴ To be true to oneself and to stand alone in a world of myth are characteristics of the Nietzschean 'Over-man': "Beyond those who dominate, freed from all ties, [is] where the highest men live."⁴⁵⁵

Nietzsche considered art the highest form of human accomplishment because it "drives the creator to overcome himself. . . . Art enlarges the world by returning it to its original explosive and chaotic character."⁴⁵⁶ Before they were banned during the Third Reich, many German speaking avant-garde artists sought to produce what Adorno calls 'natural, chaotic art'. It embodied those super-human qualities Nietzsche attributes to art.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ecce Homo*, p. 161.

⁴⁵⁵ Cited in Michael Harr's *The New Nietzsche*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988, p. 27.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

In *The Philosophy of Modern Music* whereas Adorno's psychoanalysis of 'Stravinsky' is explicit, Adorno's assessment of 'Schoenberg' is implicit. A concentration on his claims reveals that Adorno portrays Schoenberg as fearless and strong, with a deep commitment to art. Schoenberg is a humanitarian who believes in social symbiosis. He is not dependent upon the assurance of powerful parental authorities or the masses.

Ultimately, however, Adorno's characterisation is once again both literal and figurative. It is the avant-gardists' fearless challenge to the oppressive authorities that Adorno praises, and not only in Schoenberg. By subjecting themselves unflinchingly to the *Zeitgeist*, avant-garde artists continued the humanitarian tradition of great art. Even during the early stages of Expressionism their works aimed to enlighten. They uncovered society's neglected 'otherness'.

The gesture of the returning person - not the feeling of the expectant person - characterises the expression of all [great humanitarian] music, and would be the same even in a world worthy of death.⁴⁵⁷

Through painful revelation avant-garde art helped individuals confront their pathologies: "In the natural 'material' is the 'answer' - the only possible and correct answer - is ever present, but undefined."⁴⁵⁸ Adorno also uses Jung's theories to highlight the humanitarian convictions of avant-gardists.

⁴⁵⁷ Die Geste der Zurückkehrenden, nicht das Gefühl des Wartenden beschreibt den Ausdruck aller Musik und wäre es auch in der todeswürdigen Welt, p. 126.

⁴⁵⁸ In Ihrem naturhaften, >>Material<< ist die >>Antwort,<< die eine mögliche und richtige Antwort, allemal schon enthalten, aber ungeschieden, p. 126.

Immanent in Schoenberg's modern works are Jungian archetypes that helped to bring the audience to self-cognition. Whereas Stravinsky glorifies the role of the puppet in *Petrouchka*, Schoenberg's Woman in *Erwartung* and Man in *Die glückliche Hand* are victims of state capitalist society. Woman goes insane and Man is impotent in his role as a puppet. In *Die glückliche Hand*, for example, the mythical beast personifies state capitalism. Adorno transforms the archetype of the beast, or in Jungian terms, the dragon, the devil, to configure as the dynamo of capitalism.⁴⁵⁹ Schoenberg's work shows how the compromise of the self (the workers and Man) for financial profit leads to self-sacrifice, another ritual. As Jung states, in certain instances, self-sacrifice in work sometimes acts as a disruption of:

... the instinctual foundation of the personality, and is followed by a compensatory reaction taking the form of violent suppression and elimination of the incompatible tendency. It is a natural unconscious process, a collision between instinctual tendencies which the conscious ego experiences in most cases passively because it is not normally aware of these libido movements and does not consciously participate in them.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁹ Jung writes in *Symbols and Transformation* concerning myth: "Myth is what is believed always, everywhere, by everybody; hence the psyche is not of today; its ancestry goes back many millions of years. Individual consciousness is only the flower and the fruit of the season . . .," p. xxiv. He states concerning the fluidity of the archetype:

Modern psychology has a distinct advantage of having opened up a field of psychic phenomena which are themselves the matrix of all mythology. I mean dreams, visions, fantasies and delusional ideas. Furthermore, investigation of the products of the unconscious yields recognizable traces of archetypal structures which coincide with myth-motifs, among them certain types which deserve the name of dominants. These are archetypes like the animus, anima, wise old man, witch . . .," p. 425, trans. R. F. C. Hull (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956).

⁴⁶⁰ *Symbols of Transformation*, p. 424-425.

Underlying Adorno's philosophical critique of Schoenberg and his works is his concern for the Jews. This is especially evident when one examines his consistent portrayal of the Jewish composer during the 1920s - 1940s.

II

SCHOENBERG AND RECONCILIATION

That Schoenberg remained controversial during the Weimar era, seems hardly a surprise when one notes that many scholars including Adorno, used his music to justify a place for Jews in Germany. For Heinrich Berl, music by Semitic composers such as Mendelssohn, Mahler, and Schoenberg, represented a heritage of the 'Oriental' identity within Germany. Using concepts coined by Marx and Freud, Berl (1926) argued, "the Oriental crisis in Europe is clear evidence that Oriental musicians could and would have their historical mark provided they did so conscientiously as Jews."⁴⁶¹ As Alexander Ringer suggests, Mahler and Schoenberg, painted as rebels, appeared to "dare the gods themselves."⁴⁶²

From the 1880s-1933, debates over progressive and conservative culture were not only simply about aesthetic preferences, but for Jews, were tied to larger issues, inclusion or exclusion, survival or annihilation.

As a young Jewish cultural theorist of 1920s Weimar society, Adorno inherited the progressive/conservative debate. This would later

⁴⁶¹ Cited in Alexander Ringer, p. 5-6. In Max Brod's article (1921), a more radical position was taken, but again, with an ultimate hope for reconciliation between Germans and Jews. Brod argued that Schoenberg attacked Germanic convention, while exhibiting the "quintessential Jewish music added to the twentieth century," p. 6.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

impact on his perception and portrayal of Schoenberg's music in the *Philosophy of Modern Music*.

Adorno's involvement in the *Kultur* debate is documented in articles such as *Anbruch* and *Pult und Taktstock* (ca. 1926 -). Later, in 1932, Adorno shows how Stravinsky, through neoclassicism, opposes modernist aesthetics - how Stravinsky opposes autonomous art, decadence, and implicitly, the Jews:

In the Russian emigrant Stravinsky or even . . . Casella, who is so very ambitious in cultural politics, the relation to fascism is beyond question . . . It might well be that Stravinsky's music reflects upper bourgeois ideology far more precisely than, for example, the music of Richard Strauss; even so, the upper bourgeois will none-the-less suspect Stravinsky as a "destroyer" and prefer to hear Strauss in his stead - but prefer even more to hear Beethoven's Seventh Symphony.⁴⁶³

Adorno's pronouncements concerning Weimar's neoclassical culture also reveal his alignment to progressive critics, those who perceived modern art as a critique of rising fascism:

And the new music which German nationalists condemned as corrosive, rootless, and intellectual, the music in which fascists and neo-fascists find an indestructible object of wrath (as when radio stations that promote it are denounced for wasting the taxpayers' money) - even that music was entangled in national conflicts . . .⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶³ *The Social Situation of Music*, p. 140.

⁴⁶⁴ *Introduction to a Sociology of Music*, 173.

During the 1940s, Adorno portrays Schoenberg more or less as before: as a radical artist against 'fascist culture', as a prophet of the new Jewish culture, and as an heir to the throne of music established by the great German humanitarians, Bach and Beethoven.

The musical discord, which became the symbol of the so-called *Kulturbolschewismus*, and which is the conspicuous identification mark of the musical avant-garde, the supposed spirit of negativism and destruction, kept faith to [sic] Beethoven's humanism by expressing in an undiluted way the sufferings, the anguish, the fear, under which we live today long before the political crisis arose, instead of covering it up by idle comfort.⁴⁶⁵

By carrying on the debate concerning progressive versus conservative culture long after 1933, Adorno reveals his own isolation. During and after the Holocaust, it is possible that Schoenberg became a symbol not only of the humanitarian artist, but also a lonely symbol of that humanitarian art itself that had been so tragically eradicated by the Nazis.

Through his radical portrayal of Schoenberg, Adorno attempted to bring to attention the 'death of humanitarian culture', the death of otherness - which implied, of course, the death of the Jews.

No longer is it important whether Schoenberg's music actually contains all those qualities that Adorno attributes to it. What is important is Adorno's own utopian humanist view of the world:

⁴⁶⁵ National Socialism, p. 421.

For the sake of its own blind law, [Schoenberg's twelve-tone music] renounces expression and transforms itself into the memory's image of the past which becomes the means of the dream image of the future.⁴⁶⁶

Through his heroic depiction of Schoenberg's music, Adorno presents to the reader his utopian view of the world.

III

ADORNO'S UTOPIA

Like Schoenberg's dodecaphonic music, Adorno's ideal society is one in which no dominant power persists. Like the tones themselves, taboo emotions, chords, pitches and relations are now side-by-side and all have 'equal rights'. Adorno's utopian society is thus racially inclusive rather than exclusive, a place where individuals are distinct and vibrant and 'free' to be themselves, not lifeless, mechanised and in deceptively pedestrian relationships. Like dodecaphony itself, his utopian society is a place where chaos and order, subjectivity and objectivity, the rational and the irrational are permitted to 'coexist'. There no longer is the distinction between 'insider and outsider'.

Through his stylised depiction of Schoenberg's music, the Frankfurt scholar makes the practical claim that despite the increasing barrage of manipulative culture, the individual can learn to resist its effects. They can learn to nurture their natural self through exposure to

⁴⁶⁶ Um ihres blinden Eigengesetzes willen versagt sie sich dem Ausdruck und transponiert diesen ins Erinnerungsbild des Vergangenen, wo er das Traumbild des Zukünftigen meint, p. 100.

'otherness'. Exposure to socially responsible culture grounds the individual. Being grounded in one's natural, unique, and subjective tendencies leads one back onto the path of enlightenment, to a realisation of the Absolute in the Hegelian sense.

...

Adorno's much quoted: "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," is a statement against the denial of horror through deceptive beauty as in the neoclassical works of the fascists. To write 'poetry after Auschwitz' is also a confession of his dedication to creating socially responsible criticisms. The philosopher was deeply affected by anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. Reclaiming a place for the Jews intellectually and socially was his obsession during the period (1940 - 1944) in which he wrote "Schoenberg and Progress." Even as late as 1966, he states:

Whether after Auschwitz you can go on living - especially whether one who escaped by accident, one who by rights should have been killed, may go on living . . . His mere survival calls for the coldness, the basic principle of bourgeois subjectivity, without which there could have been no Auschwitz; this is the drastic guilt of him who was spared.⁴⁶⁷

It is all the more remarkable that despite the actions of the Nazis towards the Jews, Adorno was 'cold enough' to maintain his critical faculties and commitment to responsible scholarship. He was 'big' enough to blame Nazi ideology and not the German people for the Holocaust, and was

⁴⁶⁷ *Negative Dialectics*, p. 363.

among the first of the Frankfurt scholars to return to Germany to begin the healing process.⁴⁶⁸

The degree to which he was able to maintain his critical faculties is demonstrated in the following chapters where I open Adorno's 'message in a bottle' and apply his ideas to the present.

⁴⁶⁸ In explaining his overcoming of anxiety in teaching German students for the first time after the war (ca. 1948), Adorno told Lowenthal:

The decisively negative factor you can trace everywhere is the fact that the Germans . . . are no longer political subjects, nor do they only longer feel themselves to be political subjects; hence, a ghostlike, unreal quality pervades their spirit. My seminar is like a Talmud School - I wrote to Los Angeles that it is as if the spirits of the murdered Jewish intellectuals had descended into the German students. Quite uncanny. But for that very reason, at the same time, infinitely canny in the authentic Freudian sense," *Recollections*, p. 164.

CHAPTER SIX

KITSCH AND AVANT-GARDE MUSIC-MAKING

Introduction

In a letter (1946) to Max Horkheimer, Leo Lowenthal questioned the parallels Horkheimer and Adorno drew between democracy and fascism in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Horkheimer responded to Lowenthal in the following way:

. . . I still do not quite understand your extreme caution about discussing the relation of democracy and fascism. Why should it be so daring to point to the trend of democracy towards fascism? In my opinion, this trend is one of the most important theses - nay, presuppositions - of any critical theory of present-day society . . . Why do you feel that this elementary conviction should not be distinctly expressed?⁴⁶⁹

Horkheimer's response sheds light on the present study. Horkheimer and Adorno believed that state capitalism and monopoly capitalism share many similarities.

In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno blur the distinctions between: the *Kulturbüro* and the American culture industry, European anti-Semitism and North American anti-Semitism, and the use of psycho-technology in both continents to monitor, control and prescribe social behaviour.

⁴⁶⁹ *Critical Theory*, p. 207.

Adorno considered the *Philosophy of Modern Music* an extended appendix to the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.⁴⁷⁰ In the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, he formulates his metaphorical critique of post-World War Two culture through 'fascist culture'. While this discussion is obscured in his essays on Schoenberg and Stravinsky, in the "Introduction" to the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, Adorno's critique is more clear. Chapter Seven examines Adorno's criticism of kitsch and avant-garde culture in Post World War II Western society. It 'completes' Adorno's account of the roles progressive and conservative music, composers, performers and critics play in late capitalist society.

Part One

KITSCH MUSIC-MAKING

I

Second and third generation composers—Kitsch music and capitalist society—Reception of traditional and neotraditional music—Kitsch performers and conductors—Fetishistic critics—Schoenberg, a Wagnerian—Schoenberg, a mechanical composer

In the book's Introduction, Adorno uses Benjamin's article, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," as a model to outline the history of progressive and conservative culture in Germany. This becomes the basis from which he discusses (late) capitalist culture. Because of the theoretical nature of this section, Adorno's depiction,

⁴⁷⁰ Adorno writes, "More appropriately this book should be regarded as an extended appendix to [the] *Dialectic of Enlightenment*." See the *Philosophy of Modern Music*, p. xiii.

especially of kitsch music-making, appears at the literal level to be quite elitist.

Referring to Benjamin's article (See in Chapter Two), Adorno gives us the history of kitsch and avant-garde music. He argues that like the photograph which forced art to explore other forms of expression beyond immediacy and realism, progressive music was eventually forced into a similar role through its commodification especially in turn-of-the-century Germany. The phonograph, and later, sound films and radio commercials severely altered the creation, recreation and reception of classical music. Music attached to slogans, to products and ideas created appropriate associations. Music became in the Lukacsian sense, a 'calculated mass produced article', a means to dominate the masses.

Initially, expectations of audiences transcended the musical standards set by the culture bureaucracies. This imbalance of power between producer and consumer, however, deprived its audiences of any radical input. In addition, systems used to monitor and manipulate public behaviour transcended its very own perpetrators. Cultural fascism in Germany, for example, initially designed to rule the working class, came to form the identity for the rulers themselves.

Adorno claims that Hitler anticipated the hidden damage he would have on culture as a whole: "The Hitlerian statement that if his regime should ever collapse he would slam the door so that the whole world could hear it, is indicative of something much farther reaching than it seems to express."⁴⁷¹ Today, this suppression of the humanitarian legacy, the destruction of many invaluable, progressive works of art, and the death (Benjamin (1941), Webern (1945), Kirchner (1939), etc.), murder or traumatising of many great avant-garde artists and thinkers during

⁴⁷¹ National Socialism, p. 417.

the Nazi era has impacted upon art. Hitler lost the war, but his near eradication of all progressive European art has created the social climate where even Western cultural bureaucracies continue the Hitlerian legacy of the destruction of internal 'otherness' and 'external otherness'.

In the post World-War Two era, the Frankfurt scholar claims that we have 'second' and 'third' generation composers of neotraditional music (Beethoven, Bach and Mozart are examples of 'first generation' composers). Stravinsky, Hindemith and Casella, fall into the 'second' generation category; followers of first and second generation composers, such as Shostakovich or Benjamin Britten are in the 'third' generation category.⁴⁷²

Following the praxis and guidelines of culture bureaucracies, second and third generation composers directly or indirectly dictate, manipulate, censor and control the emotional experiences of the masses. As a group they embody the economic rationalism of capitalist society, i.e., they compromise art for profit.

Second generation composers have contributed significantly to the impotence of modern music-making. Especially in Europe around during the 1920s - early 1940s, second generation composers consciously or unconsciously supported a destructive restorationist tendency:

And the second neoclassic generation, such as Hindemith and Milhaud - have bowed to the collective tendency of the times more unthinkingly, and therefore mirror this tendency at least, or so it seems, more loyally than the enigmatic, driving absurdity, and exaggerated conformism of the head of the school.⁴⁷³

⁴⁷² *Philosophie der neuen Musik*, p. 16.

⁴⁷³ Und die zweite neoklassizistische Generation, Namen wie Hindemith und Milhaud, haben der Gesamttendenz der Zeit bedenkenloser sich gefügt und damit

Later, under the direction of Nazis, second and third generation composers such as Strauss, Malipiero and Orff used culture to censor and control the German masses:

Their moderation proved itself above all in its intellectual compliance which didn't commit itself to anything, composing what the day brought to them, and like the disdainful programme, finally liquidated everything that was musically uncomfortable.⁴⁷⁴

Not only did these composers distort the great German musical legacy but they also revealed a latent hostility towards individuals who created avant-garde art: "Arbitrary preservation of the antiquated endangers that which wishes to maintain, and with a bad conscience opposes everything new."⁴⁷⁵

Second generation musicians have contributed both to the marginalisation of avant-garde artists in Europe (ca., 1920s -), and to the furthering of a regressive, destructive cultural dynamic.

The legacy established by the likes of Stravinsky, Hindemith or Strauss that obeys the laws of economic rationalism has spawned a new generation of regressivists, 'third generation' composers. And whereas second generation composers such as Hindemith and Milhaud still had some talent, Adorno argues that it is questionable whether third generation composers have any talent at all:

scheinbar wenigstens treuer sie widergespiegelt als der hintergründige und darum sich selbst ins Absurde übertreibende Konformismus des Schulhaupts, p. 21.

⁴⁷⁴ Ihr Moderantismus bewährte sich vorab in einer geistigen Nachgiebigkeit, die auf nichts sich festlegte, komponierte, was der Tag ihr zutrug, und wie das schnöde Programm schließlich auch alles musikalisch Unbehagliche liquidierte, p. 15.

⁴⁷⁵ ... willkürliche Bewahrung des Überholten gefährdet, was sie bewahren will, und verstockt sich mit schlechtem Gewissen gegen das Neue, p. 16.

Shostakovich, unjustly reprimanded as a cultural Bolshevik by the authorities of his home country . . . the triumphant meagerness of Benjamin Britten, all these have in common a taste for a lack of taste, simplicity out of non-education, and immaturity which believes itself to be serene, and a lack of technical facility.⁴⁷⁶

Not only do they rob authentic traditional music of its enlightening qualities, their 'glib' reproductions implicitly oppose everything new. Even when they search their own nationalistic music for meaning, it deprives them of every consistency with the *Zeitgeist*:

Second and third generation composers share certain character weaknesses: a submissiveness to authority, an inability to invent anew, a fear of reproach. They compromise art through a lack of artistic vision, or, at least, through a desire for recognition and financial gain:

The folkloristic, neoclassic and collective schools all have only one desire, to cling to the haven of safety and to herald the preformed as the new. Their taboos are against a musical breaking-out, and their modernity is not a search, but is the domestication and resettlement of music into the pre-individualistic era of music, which as a stylish dress, suits the present phase in society so well.

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⁴⁷⁶ Der von seinen Heimatbehörden zu Unrecht als Kulturbolschewist gemaßregelte Schostakowitsch . . . die auftrumpfende Dürftigkeit Benjamin Brittens - sie alle haben gemein den Geschmack am Ungeschmack, Simplizität aus Unbildung, Unreife, die sich abgeklärt dünkt, und Mangel an technischer Verfügung, p. 16.

⁴⁷⁷ Die folkloristischen, neo-klassischen und kollektivistischen Schulen haben alle nur das eine Bestreben, im Hafen zu bleiben und das Erfaßte, Vorgeformte als das Neue auszugeben. Ihre Tabus sind gegen den musikalischen Ausbruch gerichtet, und ihre Modernität ist nichts als der Versuch, dessen Kräfte zu domestizieren und womöglich in

According to Adorno, in these composers' preference for the proven, reified, and immediate, and consequent avoidance of the new, natural, and sublime, they display abject conservatism: a fear of others and 'otherness', in art and in society. Inadvertently, they perpetuate a fear of uniqueness:

Through the superior strength of the means of distribution dealing with kitsch and sold-out cultural goods, and also through the socially produced predisposition of the listener, radical music came into a total isolation under late industrialism.⁴⁷⁸

Despite the authoritative power that culture industries wield over these composers in a system which grows stronger through circular manipulation and retroactive need, Adorno claims that these 'dilettantes' still continue to work under the constraints of culture bureaucracies:

A musical type becomes apparent, which - in shameless pretension of being modern and serious - through calculated nonsense, aligns itself with the mass culture . . . [This type of music-making] which was not dependent on anything, which composed what the day brought is how the disdainful (contemptuous) programme also

die vorindividualistische Ära der Musik zurückzusiedeln, die als Stilkleid der gegenwärtigen gesellschaftlichen Phase so gut paßt, pp. 102-103.

⁴⁷⁸ Durch die Übermacht der Verteilungsmechanismen, die dem Kitsch und den ausverkauften Kulturgütern zur Verfügung stehen, wie durch die gesellschaftlich hervorgebrachte Prädisposition der Hörer war die radikale Musik unterm späten Industrialismus in vollkommene Isolierung geraten, p. 15.

liquidated everything which was musically uncomfortable in the end.⁴⁷⁹

Music-making is characterised by absurdity "by the vain glory of the 'tune-smiths' who consider themselves to be the expression"⁴⁸⁰ of the modern age.

The current satiation of kitsch art music through media such as films, radio and advertising attests to the dangerous level in which most art music has been reduced to types of 'musical perfume'. Music correlated to linguistic or ocular stimuli, as in the modern *Gesamtkunstwerk* - film - becomes a means of eliciting specific emotional associations. Music, through culture industry tune-smiths, creates and recreates appropriate musical associations for Hollywood and Broadway directors and producers. In the concert hall, classical music is now upper-class music - music for the refined, for those who can afford the price of a ticket and for those who wish 'to demonstrate their culture to others'.⁴⁸¹ Audiences affected by kitsch art's dehumanising impulses in late capitalist society subscribe to traditional and neoclassic music for its beautiful passages, moods and associations, and also for its social status. Adorno declares, "Everything becomes a cultural good to be looked at, to be bought, to be enjoyed as a stimulus for the nerves of the big but tired businessman."⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁹ Es zeichnet ein musikalischer Typus sich ab, der, bei unverzagter Präention des Modernen und Seriösen, durch kalkulierten Schwachsinn der Maßenkultur sich angleicht

... die auf nichts sich festlegte, komponierte, was der Tag ihr zutrug, und wie das schnöde Programm schließlich auch alles musikalisch Unbehagliche liquidierte, p. 14.

⁴⁸⁰ "... vom Hochmut der "tune smiths", die sich als den Ausdruck der ... betrachten ...," p. 194.

⁴⁸¹ ... den andern ihre Kultur beweisen wollen, p. 16.

⁴⁸² National Socialism, p. 420.

The support of traditional and neotraditional music today is conducted by those who parade their cultural refinement. This 'self-serving bourgeois public' unknowingly define themselves through the choices given them by the culture industry. Such audiences depend upon the dictates of the culture industry who in turn anticipate and manipulate their reactions. Together they perpetuate a hermetic, reflexive relationship steeped in myths of racial, social and cultural refinement - as was allegedly the case during the Third Reich.

To the authoritative culture bureaucracy, each subscriber is now an abstract unit to anticipate and manipulate. As Adorno and Horkheimer state in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, media establish the precedence: "where no rejoinder is required . . . The culture industry turns all participants into listeners and authoritatively subjects them to broadcast programs."⁴⁸³

Integrated into groups in the Le Bonian sense, quantified and dehumanised by the mechanisation of allotted time for work and leisure in the Lukacsian sense, and anaesthetised by sterile, reproduced culture in the Benjaminian sense, audiences can no longer experience the now. Although Beethoven has been heralded as a father of revolutionary, humanitarian art, for example, to many, his music is received like a hit song. Audiences cling to surface melodies and fragments, which conceal his music's essence, thereby avoiding the humanity latent in the music. Even traditional forms of musical analysis cling to the surface of the music without exploring the music's essential content.

One is hardly aware of or experiences the personal struggles for individual assertion and enlightenment in truly great traditional music.

⁴⁸³ P. 121.

Even when Beethoven's revolutionary spirit is acknowledged, it is used to sell concert tickets and recordings:

The music industry, which further degrades this musical supply by galvanising it into a sanctuary, merely confirms the state of unconsciousness of the listener, for whom the harmony of Viennese Classicism attained through sacrifices - and the bursting longing of Romanticism both have been placed side-by-side upon the market as household ornaments.⁴⁸⁴

Adorno uses Le Bon's ideas of 'prestige', and Freud's idea of the father when he writes that audiences latch on to Beethoven memorabilia as if they were 'tangible' icons of the customarily amorphous culture industry itself.

Beethoven is a prestigious figure in whom the 'cultured' (like the Nazi elite) like to associate and define themselves.

... it is not only that the perceptive faculty has been so dulled by the omnipresent hit tune that the concentration necessary for responsible listening has become impossible and interspersed by traces of recollection of nonsense. Rather, sacrosanct traditional music in its performance character and for the listeners' life has become equal to commercial mass production, and traditional music's substance has not remained untouched.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁴ Der Musikbetrieb, der den Vorrat erniedrigt, indem er ihn als Heiligtum anpreist und galvanisiert, bestätigt bloß den Bewußtseinszustand der Hörer an sich, für den die entsagend errungene Harmonie des Wiener Klassizismus und die ausbrechende Sehnsucht der Romantik als Schmücke dein Heim nebeneinander konsumfähig geworden sind, p. 19.

⁴⁸⁵ ... nicht bloß ist die perzeptive Fähigkeit durch die allgegenwärtigen Schlager so abgestumpft, daß die Konzentration verantwortlichen Hörens unmöglich und von

From a Hegelian perspective, traditional music is no longer aesthetically enlightening. It does not provide the emotional experiences required to bring reflection and cognition. It dissociates, satiates and contributes to the insensitivity of society by functioning primarily as a 'political' item, for a particular social class to define themselves, rather than as a means of experiencing the now.

Adorno suggests that modern culture industries undermine an individual's self-worth and restore their confidence through products that give the illusion of a sense of meaning and belonging. Psycho-technological manipulation, particularly in advertisement, which appeals to libidinal instincts of survival and procreation has become increasingly efficient in late capitalist society. Adorno implies that culture industries appeal to the individual's primal instincts of survival of the herd by attaching images to particular products.

Like the media administrations of many democratic countries today, the Nazi culture bureau eroticised its leaders, undermined the self-worth of the masses and replaced it with state prescribed images to make society more flexible and obedient. It used mass manipulation to untap collective survival instincts:

While the deduction of the work of art out of its immanent logic, denies society and breaks through its fetishism, the ideology of its being-in-itself, to a certain degree, actually breaks through. The work of art therefore silently accepts the materialisation of the

Erinnerungsspuren des Unfugs durchsetzt ist, sondern die sakrosankte herkömmliche Musik selber ist im Charakter ihrer Aufführung und fürs Leben der Hörer der kommerziellen Massenproduktion gleichgeworden, und ihre Substanz bleibt davon nicht unberührt, p.19.

spiritual society. The standard of consumer goods is the basis upon which the right of existence of art is determined - as the criterion of social truth.⁴⁸⁶

Adorno suggests that as had occurred during the Third Reich, today, even impotent art can be sold as 'great' art. This is because the judgement of what is and isn't art is often determined by those the masses consider to be 'experts', critics, mostly employees of the culture industry. Like the character Man in *Die Glückliche Hand* or composers of the Third Reich, most critics today are all caught within the economic rationalisation of art:

The dissonances which horrify them speak of their own condition only because of that they find them unbearable. The opposite is the all-too-familiar. It is far removed from the people's dominant life forces of today, that their own experience hardly ever communicates with that experience for which traditional music stands for.⁴⁸⁷

Conductors and performers are also, by and large, workers within the division of labour. Both performers and conductors must consider what works will attract the largest audiences, or what is economically

⁴⁸⁶ Während die Deduktion des Kunstwerks aus der von seiner immanenten Logik verleugneten Gesellschaft seinen Fetischismus, die Ideologie seines An-sich-Seins zu durchbrechen meint und in gewissem Maße auch tatsächlich durchbricht, akzeptiert sie dafür stillschweigend die Verdinglichung alles Geistigen in der Warengesellschaft, den Maßstab des Konsumgutes fürs Existenzrecht von Kunst als den kritischen der gesellschaftlichen Wahrheit überhaupt, p. 32.

⁴⁸⁷ Die Dissonanzen, die sie schrecken, reden von ihrem eigenen Zustand: einzig darum sind sie ihnen unerträglich. Umgekehrt ist der Gehalt des allzu Vertrauten so weit dem entrückt, was heute über die Menschen verhängt wird, daß ihre eigene Erfahrung kaum mehr mit der kommuniziert, für welche die traditionelle Musik zeugt, p. 18.

profitable. Thus, that which is revolutionary or challenging to audiences tend to gain less of a place in musical performance - for music is, after all, for passive consumption, and to give the 'cultured', a sense of belonging.

Where they believe to understand, they perceive only a dead mould which they guard as their unquestionable possession and which is lost precisely in that moment that it becomes a possession: neutralised and robbed of its critical substance, an indifferent showpiece. Indeed, it is only the coarsest and easily remembered ideas - ominously beautiful passages, moods, associations - which find their way into the comprehension of the public.⁴⁸⁸

In (late) capitalist society, the scholar declares that traditional and neotraditional music has dulled the aesthetic sensitivity of 'those who can afford the ticket' to the point where even the 'beautiful' first generation music now contributes to the inhumanity of the world.

Adorno contends that today kitsch music-making, from repertoire selection to performance, are 'too' carefully conceived. The production is so finished that even live performances display the reproduced qualities of an assembly-line product.

Because the culture industry has educated its victims to avoid effort during their free time allotted for intellectual consumption, they cling all the more stubbornly to the appearance that blocks

⁴⁸⁸ Wo sie zu verstehen glauben, nehmen sie bloß noch den toten Abguß dessen wahr, was sie als fraglosen Besitz hüten und was schon verloren ist in dem Augenblick, in dem es zum Besitz wird: neutralisiert, der eigenen kritischen Substanz beraubt, gleichgültiges Schaustück. In der Tat fällt denn auch in die Auffassung des Publikums von traditioneller Musik nur das Allergröbste, Einfälle, die sich behalten lassen: ominös schöne Stellen, Stimmungen und Assoziationen, p. 18.

the essence. The plodding forward, the gleamingly polished style of interpretation . . . leans towards this direction in a big way.⁴⁸⁹

Performers' techniques often display the veneer of the product without the passion and the natural qualities of humanity itself. For true music to survive, Adorno argues performers must "knock down the veneer of false performances and stock-reaction styles."⁴⁹⁰

Like their audiences, many critics⁴⁹¹ a part of the reflexive system between administrations and audiences cannot discern the true value of music. He declares: "For the first time (ca. 1940s), dilettantes everywhere are launched as great composers. The economically, widely centralised musical life, forces public recognition of them."⁴⁹²

'Second nature' music as the 'greatest' artistic ideal has impacted upon critics' judgements. Part of the division of labour, critics evaluate music according to what they do or do not understand. Many of their judgements are flawed because now, art is judged in terms of its relation to traditional music and whether or not a given work is successful financially.

A lack of understanding among critics of culture industries concerning traditional, neotraditional and avant-garde music surrounds these musical objects with misconceptions. The philosopher claims that

⁴⁸⁹ Da aber die Kulturindustrie ihre Opfer dazu erzogen hat, in der Freizeit, die ihnen für geistigen Konsum zugemessen wird, Anstrengung zu vermeiden, so klammern sie sich um so starrsinniger an die Erscheinung, die das Wesen versperrt. Die vorwärtende, auf Hochglanz polierte Interpretation. . . kommt dem weit entgegen, p. 19.

⁴⁹⁰ . . . den Lack von falscher Darbietung und festgefahrenen Reaktionsweisen herunterzuschlagen, p. 19.

⁴⁹¹ It likely that Adorno's ultra-conservative newspaper critics and musicologists are 'caricatures'.

⁴⁹² Zum ersten Male werden allerorten Dilettanten als große Komponisten lanciert. Das ökonomisch weithin zentralisierte Musikleben erzwingt ihnen öffentliche Anerkennung, p. 17.

sometimes the most educated listeners are the worst,⁴⁹³ those who react to Schoenberg's music with, "I do not understand" - an utterance which [false] modesty rationalises anger as expertise.⁴⁹⁴

Even within academia, many critics cannot transcend the influence of economic rationalism. They assess music purely in terms of accounts and stock-taking (Adorno implies here traditional and Schenkerian analysis, but could also apply to pitch-class set theory). They fail to judge art within its larger socio-cultural and historical context.

Critics often fail to lead their audiences to the essential musical experience that lies submerged in musical phenomena. They concentrate on the easier task of assessing musical architecture without enlightening readers to music's 'extra-musical' qualities.

Today (ca. 1940s), traditional critics hostile to fascism, inadvertently defend a Hitlerian position with regard to their aversion to avant-garde art:

Today we find the heritage of this denunciatory notion among some of the sincerest foes of the Hitlerian system. The world has become so ugly and terrifying, so runs the argument, that art should no longer dwell upon distorted forms, discords and everything branded as being destructive, but should return to the realm of beauty and harmony. The world of destruction, terror and sadism is the world of Hitler. And art should show its opposition to it by going back to its traditional ideals.⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹³ It is possible that this comment relates to the general ambivalence many progressive European artists received during the 1930s and 1940s by eminent scholars from eminent American professors from universities such as Yale.

⁴⁹⁴ "Das verstehe ich nicht," . . . eine Äußerung, deren Bescheidenheit Wut als Kennerschaft rationalisiert, p. 9.

⁴⁹⁵ National Socialism, p. 422

Adorno defies this argument in the following manner:

What is wrong about this argument is not that it sounds Hitlerian, but that it is infantile and expresses a general reversion of thinking which goes infinitely beyond the sphere of the arts - and hatred of thinking, hostility against the development of independent thought is what makes for fascism. . . . The infantile twist is the forthright identification of the ugly and beautiful in art with the ugly and beautiful in reality. . . . Thinking is endangered [*sic*] of losing the power of discriminating between imagery and reality.⁴⁹⁶

It is just this taboo of expressing the essence, the depth of things, this compulsion of keeping to the visible, the fact, the datum and accepting it unquestioningly which has survived as one of the most sinister cultural heritages of the fascist era, and there is real danger of a kind of pink pseudo-realism sweeping the world after this war, which may be more efficient but which is certainly not fundamentally superior to the art exhibitions commandeered by the Nazis.⁴⁹⁷

Today, with humanity being sapped of its natural qualities in the Western world, through virtual, homogenising culture, as in Germany during the time of the Nazis, a fear of internal and external otherness comes to characterise modern existence.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 422.

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 423.

There is, above all, the display of an aggressive spirit of community as an end in itself, played up artificially so as not to allow any questioning of its real meanings. The idea of collectivity is made a fetish, glorified as such, and only loosely connected with concrete social contents which may easily be changed with every turn of *Realpolitik*.⁴⁹⁸

This denial of 'otherness' is projected onto objects of art and people who exhibit and reveal such qualities. With neoclassic music as the dominant form of music today, performed in a sterile manner to audiences expecting a stylised form of popular music, the concert hall becomes a ritualistic gathering place, (in some respects like Adorno's depiction of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*) for the perpetuation of behaviour of the most primitive kind. For many in the audience, the concert hall becomes a place to celebrate the loss of individuality, to forget the troubling realities of contemporary existence and to assert one's racial and social superiority over others.

Adorno exaggerates, therefore, the most striking, destructive aspects of traditional music-making in capitalist society. His Marxist tendencies emerge when he, like Benjamin, argues that traditional music making is a bourgeois enterprise.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

II

ADORNO'S EXAGGERATIONS

Read literally, Adorno's one-sided account of traditional music-making leaves no room for the few who manage to transcend the 'facade' of kitsch culture, artists such as the late Segovia and Glenn Gould, or even Dutoit, those that I believe, crystallise the humanitarianism in great traditional works. If the battle ground is the concert hall, then such artists - at their best - melt the hearts of the 'elite'. Especially in Gould's case, it is my belief that he succeeds in a few of his recordings (such as his second recording of the *Goldberg Variations*) in capturing aspects of the humanitarianism that characterises Bach's music.

But one must keep in mind that Adorno's intention is not to present to us a literal text, but 'a message in a bottle', a prophetic, theoretical text, a text that is intentionally brash and incisive. When one interprets Adorno's views on kitsch music-making from such a perspective, and aligns his ideas - generally - to the power of culture industries today to control, suppress and monitor the behaviour of the contemporary individual, his deliberately exaggerated views on kitsch culture become shockingly relevant.

Today, for example, Beethoven's music is heard in so many guises that it diminishes its impact through satiation. One hears the theme of Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata," for example, in electronically equipped Christmas cards, cafes, malls, elevators, on radio, as background music of television commercials, the internet, played by instruments as varied as the classical guitar, and the synthesised pan-pipes.

Adorno states ultimately that it is not that traditional music-making is bad in itself. Rather, it is the manner in which it has in

capitalist society been exploited to the point where it now dissociates. He foresaw the sterilisation of human reactions as a trend that would continue long after World-War Two.

His depiction of the 'power' of the culture industry, if criticised during the 1940's - 1970s, has gained increasing support within the last two decades. Jameson suggests that what Adorno intended to be 'purely insightful' has configured to become 'literal' in late capitalist society:

This decade [1980's] Adorno's prophecies of the 'total system' finally came true, in wholly unexpected forms . . . in which late capitalism has all but succeeded in eliminating the final loopholes of nature and the unconscious, of subversion and the aesthetic, of individual and collective praxis . . .⁴⁹⁹

Despite the destructive rubric of kitsch music making, there are still those composers who attempt to resist its destructive tendencies. In many ways, however, Adorno claims that their efforts are flawed.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Part Two

AVANT-GARDE MUSIC-MAKING

I

*Aleatory Music: creation—critique of aleatory and super-serial music—
critique of the works of Schoenberg's disciples: Berg and Webern*

Adorno praises post World-War Two avant-garde artists as a whole for their sustained rebellion against kitsch culture:

Advanced music has no choice but to insist upon hardening without concession to that humanitarianism - where it is up to its tempting tricks - which it sees through as a mask of inhumanity.⁵⁰⁰

John Cage, a leading figure of aleatory music during the late 1940's and former student of Schoenberg, expresses a similar opinion but arrives at his position through a different means, Zen Buddhism:

Every being is the Buddha just as, for the anarchist, every being is a ruler. Now, my music liberates because I give people the chance to change their minds in the way I've changed mine. I don't want to police them. We need first of all a music which not only are [Sic] sounds just sounds but in which people are people, not subject, that is, to laws established by any one of them, even if he is 'the composer' or the 'conductor'. The situation relates to individuals differently, because attention isn't focused in one

⁵⁰⁰ Es bleibt der avancierten Musik nichts übrig, als auf ihrer Verhärtung zu bestehen, ohne Konzession an jenes Menschliche, das sie, wo es noch lockend sein Wesen treibt, als Maske der Unmenschlichkeit durchschaut, p. 28.

direction. Freedom of movement is basic to both this art and this society.⁵⁰¹

But although he is more favourable towards aleatory artists, Adorno shows certain trends in modern music to be flawed largely on the ground of contradictions between their design and philosophical intent. While in agreement with aleatory artists in principle, Adorno has difficulty with their emphasis on subjectivity. The latter is so severe that it loses its social significance:

As soon as he is in his own surroundings, the one of free artistic production overcomes the last heteronomy, the last material [*Stoffliche*]; he begins to circle, imprisoned within himself, but released from the resisting, from which permeation [social context] he had received his meaning.⁵⁰²

Through compositional design, the performer is encouraged to pursue the inner logic of pieces to the point where the experience becomes obscure even unto itself. Its severe attempts to negate stock emotions, moods and melodies through 'freedom' causes aleatory music to lose its critical function.

Adorno suggests that aleatory music loses its redemptive artistic and social qualities for which it was initially designed. A simple shrug of the shoulders of the listener becomes a valid criticism against

⁵⁰¹ Cited in Antokoletz's *Twentieth Century Music* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1992) p. 476.

⁵⁰² Sobald er in seinem eigenen Umkreis, dem der freien künstlerischen Produktion, das letzte Heteronome, Stoffliche ganz bewältigt, beginnt er gefangen in sich zu kreisen, abgelöst vom Widerstrebenden, aus dessen Durchdringung er seinen Sinn einzig empfindet, p. 28.

performances determined by the rolling of a dice to determine musical direction, (or, later, perhaps a composition such as "4':33" (ca. 1952)).⁵⁰³ Indeed avant-garde art must rebel against the social totality. It must, however, be contemporary, experiential, and remain socially responsible if it is to further its aesthetic illuminations.

Adorno's criticisms of aleatory and superserial music are similar.⁵⁰⁴ He acknowledges that superserial music emerged out of the necessity to go beyond the confines of commercial art music:

⁵⁰³ Luciano Berio writes during the same period, "Today, for the first time, we have the curiosity of composers whom even our fore-fathers would not have hesitated to call 'anti-musical'. It is disconcerting to see how the possibility of writing music without being personally involved . . . has already become part of the 'history of music'," cited in Antokoletz, p. 382.

⁵⁰⁴ Adorno's critique of the Darmstadt School stems, in part, from his assessment of Webern's later music. In his superserial works, Webern destroys the historical residue of music to the point where even polyphony (ca. 1940s - 1944) no longer has a place. In a Krausian manner, Adorno posits Webern's late works within the context of Nazi Germany, itself a dramatic metaphor of (late) capitalist society:

So spellbound is the subject in the present phase, that what it [art] could say has already been said. It is so banned by the horror, that it can't say anymore than what would be worth saying. It is so powerless in front of reality that the claim to expression already touches vanity, although hardly anyone is left to [create and receive] it.

So fixiert scheint das Subjekt in der gegenwärtigen Phase, daß, was es sagen könnte, gesagt ist. So gebannt ist es vom Entsetzen, daß es nicht mehr sagen kann, was zu sagen sich lohnte. So ohnmächtig ist es vor der Realität, daß der Anspruch des Ausdrucks bereits die Eitelkeit streift, obwohl ihm ein anderer kaum überhaupt noch gelassen ist, p. 108.

In The Third Reich, music is dead because of the *Kultur* bureau's official ban of all art that doesn't propagate fascist ideology. Webern's distrust of state capitalism (and indirectly, his distrust of monopoly capitalism) is so strong, that it crystallises in a music that questions the very claim to musical expression in our administered world. His withdrawal from traditional expression becomes a philosophically salient position:

Its melancholy contemplation is, in its purest expression, a distrustful recoil from the trace of consumer goods - without being in control of the expressionless as the truth.

Seine melancholische Versenkung ist noch im reinsten Ausdruck vor der Spur der Ware misstrauisch zurückgeschreckt, ohne doch des Ausdruckslosen als der Wahrheit mächtig zu sein. Was möglich wäre, ist nicht möglich, p. 108.

Adorno claims, however, that although his music is deeply meaningful in its pathos, it is Webern's very withdrawal that renders his music inferior to that of Schoenberg. Whereas

... the strictness of the structure, wherein music alone asserts itself against the ubiquity of commercialism, has hardened in itself to the point that the learned by heart, the realistic, can't be reached by music anymore which once brought out the substance which made absolute music truly absolute.⁵⁰⁵

Adorno argues, however, its emphasis on intellectual structures is so prominent that it too moves beyond the *Zeitgeist*: "As a result of its absolute intellectualisation, the work is transformed into a [state of] blind existence, in glaring contrast to the unavoidable designation of every work of art as spirit."⁵⁰⁶

Composers of the Darmstadt School place far too much emphasis on technique and not enough emphasis on the impact of music on the listener:

In the case of many imitators (of Schoenberg), the infinite struggle to include all parameters in the construction produces something of a unanimity of dotted notes [musical points], unrelated to each other and painfully monotonous when deployed over vast

Berg surrenders to the influence of the bourgeois past, and Webern succumbs to fatalism, Schoenberg continues to fight illusory collectivity and megalomania in its various artistic and social guises. And in 1930s Germany and America, Schoenberg's tonal, atonal, and dodecaphonic works diffuse tonality of its reifying, politically destructive power. Unlike Webern, Schoenberg offers hope through music by opposing official and commodified culture and its authorities. It wars against myth-makers in Europe and in America by shattering false communities.

⁵⁰⁵ ... die Strenge des Gefüges, durch welche allein Musik gegen die Ubiquität des Betriebs sich behauptet, hat sie derart in sich verhärtet, daß jenes ihr Auswendige, Wirkliche sie nicht mehr erreicht, welches ihr einmal den Gehalt zubachte, aus dem absolute Musik wahrhaft zur absoluten wurde, p. 27.

⁵⁰⁶ ... wird das Werk gerade vermöge seiner absoluten Vergeistigung zu einem blind Existierenden, in grellem Widerspruch zur unvermeidlichen Bestimmung eines jeglichen Kunstwerks als Geist, p.30.

stretches; even the sympathetic listener cannot avoid the impression that a great amount of muscle [also in performance] has been used to lift hollow weights.⁵⁰⁷

Despite their efforts to avoid the influence of bureaucratic culture, Adorno contends that aleatory music and superserial music suffer from similar faults to those evident in kitsch music. Kitsch works of art (today, they would include works such as *Evita*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, or *Cats*)⁵⁰⁸ are designed for the bourgeois audience; avant-garde music is designed for the intellectual; kitsch kills art because of its assembly-line qualities; aleatory and superserial music, because of their intellectual, obscure qualities, seem to perform the socio-political function of serving exclusively the bourgeois intellectual. Following Benjamin and Lukacs, Adorno suggests that aleatory and superserial music fail to forge works that embody the *Zeitgeist*.

It is in Schoenberg's free usage of duration and other musical parameters or even Picasso's unreified search for artistic meaning that gives his subjective works its 'universality'. It is the art's 'humane' experiential qualities that gives it its enlightening qualities.

Hence, the failure of certain avant-garde art is that it sometimes falls into a subjectivity that works against its attempts to be socially responsible. Hermetic works become works for connoisseurs.

The Frankfurt scholar suggests that like Expressionist art, avant-garde art must remain in touch with the *Zeitgeist*. It must not withdraw, but must maintain its humanitarianism. It must continue the legacy of humanism established by the likes of Goethe, later Proust and Kafka.

⁵⁰⁷ "Music and Technique," *Telos*, 43 (1980), p. 89.

⁵⁰⁸ See Horkheimer and Adorno's critique of various Broadway productions in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

If Adorno's views are symbolic, then his insights should be relevant to other forms of mass culture. Secondly, if his ideas are messages in a bottle, then his ideas should configure in our present decade. The next section applies Adorno's insights to certain aspects of culture today.

II

ADORNO'S *FLASCHENPOST*

This section records an exercise. It records my application of Adorno's theoretical insights to mass culture today. Because Adorno wrote the *Philosophy of Modern Music* in part as a homage to Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," and because film has become a primary means of transmitting mass culture, I focus on this medium. This section is an introduction as an extensive discussion would digress beyond the scope of this thesis.

Indeed, Adorno's prophecies were meant to point us to the most debilitating aspects of mass culture. When one aligns his insights to current cultural criticism several parallels emerge. His observations from the 1930s to the 1950s on film are sometimes indistinguishable from those made by scholars today. I will rely on his less cryptical texts surrounding the *Philosophy of Modern Music* to illuminate his metaphorical analysis of the theatrical works of Stravinsky and Schoenberg.

As Adorno had predicted, mass culture is primarily a form of entertainment to balance work:

Music, art and literature tend to become recreational activities, the means to help the tired masses to gain new strength and to get away from the drudgery of their practical existence.⁵⁰⁹

Susan Sontag states it another way:

A capitalist society requires a culture based on images. It needs to furnish vast amounts of entertainment in order to stimulate buying and anaesthetise the injuries of class, race, and sex. And it needs to gather unlimited amounts of information, the better to exploit natural resources, increase productivity, keep order, make war, give jobs to bureaucrats. . . . The production of images also furnishes a ruling ideology. Social change is replaced by a change in images.⁵¹⁰

Instead of causing the proletariat to revolt against the capitalists as Benjamin had hoped, film - most noticeably in advertising - now functions essentially as a means to dominate.

In late Western capitalist society, the power to reconstruct collective belief systems, in a reflexive system between producers and consumers, rests, more than ever, in the hands of capitalist administrators. Bauman writes:

Once the relationships of the individuals to both nature and society have been effectively mediated by expert skills and their attendant technology, it is those who possess the skills to

⁵⁰⁹ National Socialism, p. 427.

⁵¹⁰ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1977), pp. 178-179.

administer the technology that command the life-activities. The life world itself is saturated by expertise - structured, articulated, monitored and reproduced.⁵¹¹

Through satiation, incessant replay, direct communication, subliminal manipulation, industrialists and politicians use film media to create, recreate and reproduce perceptions. In their book on the pragmatics of effective marketing, Dennis Adcock, Ray Bradfield, Al Halborg and Caroline Ross instruct:

It should be realised by now that advertising covers more than persuading of a consumer to buy something. It is also a means of trying to influence behaviour and beliefs.⁵¹²

An average television commercial 'spot' of 30 seconds with an estimated audience of 10 million costs over £120,000 in Great Britain. As a consequence, marketers must create advertisements that target their audiences effectively.⁵¹³ They must create what advertisers call desire for the product. What Adorno wrote of mass culture in 1932 still seems relevant today:

The mechanism of wish-fulfilment is rooted so deeply in the unconscious and is assigned so cautiously to the darkness of the unconscious that this mechanism - precisely in the most important cases - is hardly accessible without the aid of theory.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹¹ Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and Ambivalence* (New York: Polity Press, 1991), p. 214.

⁵¹² *Marketing: Principles and Practice* (London: Pitman, 1993), p. 272.

⁵¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 271-300.

⁵¹⁴ *Social Situation of Music*, p. 158.

Advertisers often use archetypal images (such as mothers, fathers or modern-day heroes) and arouse libidinal instincts to achieve the sale of a product or an idea. As Elliot writes:

For it is within these deep, affective elements of the unconscious imaginary that subjectivity 'opens out' to a self, to others, to reason, and social reality. This 'opening out' of the unconscious occurs within specific symbolic forms of society and politics. The simultaneous empowerment and repression of the self which this signals is not, however, some secondary reordering of the psychic processes. Rather, the imaginary dimensions of the unconscious are deeply embedded in, and elaborated through asymmetrical relations of power which structure modern institutions of social life. As such, the social field figures in this account, not simply as a force which is external, but as a productive basis which constitutes human subjects at the deepest unconscious roots of experience.⁵¹⁵

Advertisers satiate to infiltrate and influence the collective psyche:

It has since become harder to ignore the much-repeated fact that by graduation from high school [in North America] the average child will have spent over 20,000 hours watching television . . . A child will be exposed *each year* [my italics] to 18,000 - 21,000 commercial messages.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁵ A. Elliot as cited in Peter Dahlgren's *Television and the Public Sphere* (London: Sage, 1995), p. 108.

⁵¹⁶ Stephen Kline, *Out of the Garden* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 19.

Monopolies deliberately target specific groups by manipulating insecurities concerning ageing, sexuality and urban isolation for financial profit. In North America, the facial cream, *Oil of Olay*, promises younger healthier looking skin; the chocolate bar, *Mr. Big*, promises respect and virility to male teenagers with the slogan, "When you're this Big they call you Mr.;" Pepsi advertisements coerce viewers to join "The Pepsi Generation;"⁵¹⁷ *Pizza Hut* portrays in its commercials the family environment to counter urban loneliness. They attempt to "build an 'emotional bond' with the customers."⁵¹⁸ Adorno (1951) writes:

[Consumers] overcome the feeling of impotence that creeps over them in the face of monopolistic production by identifying themselves with the inescapable product.⁵¹⁹

Today, through constant barrage, the prescribed images of the ideal woman and man change so as to undermine the proletariat's self-esteem. Capitalists through product lines such as *Armani*, *Chanel*, *Calvin Klein*, *et al*, provoke fears of impotence, loneliness and ageing and provide solutions through consumption. Christopher Lasch writes:

⁵¹⁷ In "On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Hearing," Adorno (1938) examines the manner in which a British beer advertisement was presented:

For a while, an English brewery used for propaganda purposes a billboard that bore a deceptive likeness to one of the whitewashed brick walls which are so numerous in the slums of London and the industrial cities of the North . . . On it, chalk-white, was a careful imitation of awkward writing. The words said: 'What we want is Watney's'. The brand of beer was presented like a political slogan . . . This billboard gives an insight into the nature of up-to-date propaganda, which sells its slogans as well as its wares, just as here the wares masquerade as a slogan . . ., p. 42.

⁵¹⁸ *Marketing*, p. 277.

⁵¹⁹ Freudian Theory, p. 51.

The propaganda of consumption turns alienation itself into a commodity. It addresses itself to the spiritual desolation of modern life and proposes consumption as a cure. It not only promises to palliate all the old unhappiness to which flesh is heir; it creates or exacerbates new forms of unhappiness. . . . Advertising institutionalises envy and its attendant anxieties.⁵²⁰

One's self worth is often determined by the cost of the products they purchase. Adorno (1938) approaches this from a less theoretical perspective:

The auto-religion makes all men brothers in the sacramental moment with the words 'that is a Rolls Royce', and in moments of intimacy, when women give greater importance to the hairdressers and cosmeticians than to the situation for the sake of which the hairdressers and cosmeticians are employed . . . The girl whose satisfaction consists solely in the fact that she and her boyfriend 'look good': all this operates according to the same command. Before the theological caprices of commodities, the consumers become temple slaves. Those who sacrifice themselves nowhere else can do so here, and here they are fully betrayed.⁵²¹

Current advertisers often use prestigious figures to endorse products. Like Adorno's depiction of state capitalist heroes, media today satiate viewers with images of 'leaders' in the Le Bonian and Freudian sense, or archetypal father-figures:

⁵²⁰ *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York: Norton, 1979), p. 138.

⁵²¹ *Fetish Character*, p. 35.

... the incessant plugging of names and supposedly great men ... the formation of the imagery of an omnipotent and unbridled father-figure by far transcending the individual father and therewith apt to be enlarged into a 'group ego' is the only way to promulgate the passive-masochistic attitude ... to whom one's will has to be surrendered ...⁵²²

Like Adorno's depiction of the glorification of self-sacrifice in crowd-like behaviour, the wise old man in *The Rite of Spring*, or the 'harmoniously' barbaric music in Stravinsky's *Petrouchka*, mass advertising uses every means possible to further the automatic consumption of state and monopoly sanctioned ideas and products.

Paraphrasing Richard Poole, Peter Dahlgren writes, "Both the market and the bureaucracy operate 'without regard for persons' and on calculable rules."⁵²³ Poole writes, "It is the exclusion of the personal, the emotional, and the domestic which is essential for modern [economic] rationality."⁵²⁴

As had occurred during the Third Reich, the reflexive relationships between consumer and seller, producer and the 'reproduced' have become increasingly hermetic: with power resting ultimately in the hands of those who possess the power to dictate.

In mass culture, language and themes must be reduced to their most accessible to appeal to the largest audience possible. Through time, the impact of direct communication impacts negatively on the manner in which individuals perceive the world and communicate.

⁵²² Freudian Theory, p. 124.

⁵²³ P. 93.

⁵²⁴ *Morality and Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 47.

Through satiation, Adorno claims that individuals begin to adopt patterns of communication similar to those in mass media (see Chapter Two). This becomes in time 'unnatural' - a form of what Lukacs described as 'second natural' - a legacy of impotent, cliché ridden forms that evolves in a similar manner to natural language.

Such modes of communication become increasingly abstracted from reality. They become increasingly beyond Benjamin's ideal of the realisation of the Absolute through 'tactile' language, language that captures "the rich nowness of the present (*Jetztzeit*)."⁵²⁵

Ultimately, one cannot ground one's true self in the dictates of monopoly capitalists. While belonging to a group may give some a sense of community, even invincibility and power, 'congregating' in the Nietzschean sense, undermines the individual's self-worth. In Adornian hyperbolas, relying upon various divisions of the culture industry to tell us how to dress and behave, what to think and feel, discourages us from realising our innate creative and intellectual potential.

Like the woman in *Erwartung* who goes insane even though she subscribes to the dictates of the authorities, many individuals today experience alienation, futility, and anxiety despite buying into the capitalist ideology of equating success with "what one pays in the market for a product."⁵²⁶

As Adorno had predicted (1945), today, a more or less homogenous culture is sweeping across North America and Europe:

What I envisage here is that the arts in Europe as far as they have contact with the broad masses, above all moving pictures, radio

⁵²⁵ Williams, p. 208.

⁵²⁶ Adorno, *Fetish Character*, p. 34.

and popular literature, will indulge in a kind of streamlining in order to please the customer, a sort of pseudo-Americanisation with poorer means and less efficiency . . .⁵²⁷

Through effective marketing world-wide, American monopoly capitalists in particular, constantly challenge indigenous cultural, social and moral values.

Their marketing, based on the untapping of archetypes and appeals to libidinal instincts, has become so effective that the result is an increasing Americanisation of global culture, what Adorno might have called (in Lukacsian terms) the 'irrationality of an economically rational, global community', or what Herbert Schiller calls 'cultural imperialism'.⁵²⁸ Like Adorno's metaphorical depiction of *Petrouchka* and *The Rite of Spring*, film (advertising) is being used by mega-corporations to sell products and ideas, to increase global tribalism.

Regarding the fate of European culture, Adorno predicted in 1945,

There is a last danger . . . I may call it the danger of the transformation of European culture into a kind of National Park, a realm of the tolerated and even admired, but mainly in terms of its quaintness, its being different from the general standards of technological civilisation . . .⁵²⁹

Despite the remarkable relevance of Adorno's prophecies and indeed their parallels to the ideas of contemporary scholars, as Kuspit writes,

⁵²⁷ National Socialism, p. 428.

⁵²⁸ *Mass Communication and the American Empire* (New York, 1969). See also *Late Imperial Culture*, eds. R. de la Campa, E.A.Kaplan and M. Sprinker (London: Verso, 1995).

⁵²⁹ National Socialism, p. 428.

Adorno's prophecies do not allow for the "ironical way society can be used against itself to recover possibilities it thought it had eliminated."⁵³⁰

Resistance to the debilitating impact of late capitalist ideology and mass culture has come occasionally from Hollywood and independent film makers. Although a 'Hollywood director', Robert Altman, for example, has used film as perhaps Benjamin would have championed, to criticise the impact of administered culture on American society. The facade of the fashion industry has been captured in Robert Altman's controversial *Pret à porter* (1994); the satiating impact of television and its debilitating impact on interpersonal communication are captured in Ethan and Joel Coen's 'independent' film, *Fargo* (1996).

With advertisements of Afro-American athletes such as Carl Lewis, Michael Jordan, Shaq O'Neal or *Pocahontas* memorabilia touted world-wide, mega-advertisement corporations are inadvertently pushing for the adoration of those that were once, and are still considered by many to be social 'others'. In contemporary society, therefore, even when used to exploit and manipulate, film can sometimes have a positive effect on collective perceptions.

But perhaps it is a matter of degrees, and today, film media used as a critical voice are indeed an exception as is the residual effect of positive representation. In addition, the mere fact that culture industrialists can use film to transform social behaviour and racial prejudices, to coerce us into being more 'humane or inhumane', indicates the degree to which mass manipulation has become an integral part of contemporary society.

To pursue an in-depth analysis of the debate between Adorno and Benjamin in terms of film and its power to 'manufacture consent',⁵³¹ the

⁵³⁰ P. 326.

dynamics between leaders and followers, or insiders and outsiders goes well beyond the scope of this thesis. With regard to the 'other', for example, as Ella Shohat writes:

... people can occupy diverse positions, being empowered on one axis, say that of class, but not on another, say that of race and gender. Instead of a simple oppressor/oppressed dichotomy we find a wide spectrum of complex relationalities of domination, subordination and collaboration. At the extreme ends of this continuum, certainly, are groups respectively empowered along all the axes, on the one hand, and groups empowered along none of them, on the other.⁵³²

And indeed, many scholars have assumed the task of reformulating Adorno's ideas: Williams has highlighted the similarities and fissures between the thought of Adorno, Derrida and the 'progressive' music of Ligeti; Jameson has used Adorno's aesthetic ideas concerning the culture industry as a starting point for a critique of contemporary society;⁵³³ Noam Chomsky⁵³⁴ has written several important and controversial books on American mass media and foreign policy that inadvertently parallel many of Adorno's concerns.

⁵³¹ See E. S. Hermann and Noam Chomsky's consummate study of media, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon, 1988).

⁵³² "The Struggle over Representation: Casting, Coalitions, and the Politics of Identification." In *Late Imperial Culture*, eds. Roy de la Campa, E. Ann Kaplan and Michael Sprinker (London: Verso, 1995), P. 168.

⁵³³ See Jameson's *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1991), and his study on film, *Signatures of the Visible* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

⁵³⁴ Adorno's critique of American politics still resonates today. Noam Chomsky has, for example, accused American corporations and governments of practicing modern forms of colonialism in Latin America. See Noam Chomsky's *The Culture of Terrorism* (London: Pluto, 1988) in which he calls for a more informed analysis of American foreign policy in Latin America - beyond what major American media networks present.

Adorno's scholarship has had a profound effect on Habermas who has, in turn, influenced a generation of cultural theorists and media specialists. As Dalgren writes, "Habermas' intellectual roots lie with the Frankfurt School, and his theses about the public sphere became inspirational for much critical media research."⁵³⁵ And whereas writings on media and culture often become bogged down sometimes only as a result of their situatedness,⁵³⁶ Adorno's message in a bottle maintains its intended transcendental qualities. It opens up new vistas and perspectives and raises important questions concerning culture and the language used to discuss culture.

When examined in relation to his other works, Adorno's *Philosophy of Modern Music* oscillates between theory and practice. The book's analysis of works such as *Petrouchka* or *The Rite of Spring*, and even *Erwartung* all highlight themes that surface in many of Adorno's earlier and later writings. They include the manipulation of psycho-technology to infiltrate and transform the collective psyche, the return to tribalism in technologically advanced society, the death of experience and humanity in (late) capitalist society.

At the theoretical level, when Adorno examines the role of leaders in *Petrouchka* and *The Rite of Spring*, his intention is to present an ironic caricature of the Le Bonian leader, the 'father' - presidents, prime ministers, television evangelists, demagogues we should still be able to recognise today. When Adorno explores the psyche of 'Stravinsky', his intention is to present a psychological snap-shot of the culture industry's propped-up artist. S/he may be a director, actor, singer or composer, one

⁵³⁵ p. 9.

⁵³⁶ In the second edition of his influential book, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, trans. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (1962, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), Habermas acknowledges the difficulty in writing works that remain timely in light of the radical advances in technology and changing social relations of power.

who may be lacking in talent, yet is heralded as 'great'. S/he may also be a talented individual who has 'sold-out', bought into the destructive legacy of an inhumane capitalist dynamo.

When Adorno highlights the archetypes, clichés and latent messages in Stravinsky's ballets, his intention is to present the means through which image, sound and text are combined in (late) capitalist society to create, recreate and reproduce the appropriate collective disposition among consumers.

Adorno also presents the polemic. When he lionises 'Schoenberg', his intention is to anticipate the efforts of those that attempt to create illuminating art - perhaps artists such as Ligeti and Adolph Gottlieb. The Frankfurt scholar's prophecies concerning the avant-garde are also cautious. When he chastises the Darmstadt School or aleatory composers, his criticisms are intended to cover a larger historical and cultural scope, to cause us today to be critical of various types of radical cultural endeavours.

Like Benjamin and Lukacs, Adorno is weary of hermetic works of art in all their guises, as he is weary of forms of avant-garde art that serve to define groups of the 'radical' bourgeois. But whereas Benjamin dismisses avant-garde art and its patrons, Adorno champions (what he perceives to be) its most effective manifestations, and holds fast to the possibility of ever-changing, socially responsible art.

The scholar's ideal intention is to encourage us to look beyond the facade of creation, recreation and reception of avant-garde art, and to encourage us - as individuals - to judge (post-)modern works of their individual merits, and their enlightening qualities.

Rather than being outmoded, the *Philosophy of Modern Music* is timely. Read metaphorically, the book unravels ideas and issues that

have become extremely significant, some would argue, essential to the survival of humanity in late capitalist society. At its most effective, it presents rebarbative ideas that counter the sometimes debilitating effects of capitalist culture. As Fredric Jameson writes, "Adorno's Marxism, which was of no great help in the previous periods, may turn out to be just what we need today."⁵³⁷

Part Three

THE POSSIBILITY OF A MEANINGFUL ART IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Criteria for culture --Criteria for cultural criticism

At the literal level, Adorno claims that in late industrial society, the possibility of creating socially responsible 'avant-garde' art is hampered by several factors. Because such art is unmarketable, artists must rely extensively on institutions to 'support' their art. Various obligations force these institutions into supporting new art, most of them, having little to do with enlightenment or humanitarian intentions.

Most artists must rely on commissions for a living. Commissions from such organisations impede the freedom of the spirit in the process of creation. While writing works for specific occasions may provide financial support, and fulfil related heteronomous tasks, the combined effect of securing commissions, deadlines, and creating for specific occasions, impacts upon artistic creation. Tension resolves towards appropriation, not towards freedom.

⁵³⁷ *Late Marxism*, p. 5.

Adorno writes that modern creators can withstand the dangers only by "a strength of resistance surpassing anything non-conformist artists ever had to muster before."⁵³⁸ He outlines broad suggestions for those who wish to continue the legacy established by great avant-garde artists such as Picasso and Schoenberg:

- a.) The artist should guard themselves against the levelling trend of the machinery of modern society, as well as against the adaptation to the market through outdated, and hence, fashionable provincialistic art;
- b.) The artist should not be a commercial designer, or in contrast, a stubborn, blind specialist (In the latter, Adorno means the prototypical 'ivory tower' artist);
- c.) S/he should experience the shocking experiences brought about by this civilisation, experienced by every living being; The artist must be grounded in the issues of the day, be well-informed socially.
- d.) The artist should be in complete command of the most advanced means of artistic construction, be both an exponent and a sworn enemy of the prevailing historical tendency;
- e.) The artist should insist on uncompromising realisations of their artistic intentions;
- f.) The artist should not yield to any pressure of the ever more overwhelming organisations of our time.⁵³⁹ For in (late) capitalist society,

An artist who still deserves the name should proclaim nothing, not even humanism. . . The humane survives today only where it is

⁵³⁸ National Socialism, p. 428.

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*, 429.

ready to challenge, by its very appearance and its determined irreconcilability . . .⁵⁴⁰

Only in such ways, can salient art enlighten us in this increasingly sterilising, dissociating, mechanised world.

The scholar also intended that his criticisms apply to art criticism. When one applies Adorno's criteria to that of the current modes of musicological research, several important questions arise:

- a.) Is musicology provincialistic in perpetuating outdated modes of research?
- b.) Are we stubborn, blind specialists - 'ivory tower' scholars?
- c.) Do we or should we confront relevant social-cultural issues of the day through our scholarship?
- d.) Should humane convictions be one of our primary motives for criticising art?
- e.) Have we yielded to prevalent economic conventions and thus, compromised our views for the sake of consensus and agreement?
- g.) Have we succumbed to the influence of administered society and in the process, impeded our own potential, the study of musicology itself, and the process of enlightenment?

When one looks at avant-garde art of the twentieth century, and aligns it to the scholar's criteria, artists such as Schoenberg and Picasso stand as consummate examples of socially responsible Overmen.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 429.

Schoenberg and Picasso weren't blind specialists. Their styles changed throughout their lives. Both were in touch with the social dilemmas of their time, and well acquainted with the most advanced techniques. Both were uncompromising in realising their artistic creations. Above all, as works such as Picasso's *Guernica* and Schoenberg's *A Survivor from Warsaw* reveal, both created works for the sake of humanity, not for the prevailing cultural bureaucracies. As Adorno wrote of Schoenberg's music in 1955: "Horror has never rung as true in music . . . The Jewish song with which the *Survivor from Warsaw* concludes is music as the protest of mankind against myth."⁵⁴¹

Like Picasso and Schoenberg, Adorno wasn't a blind specialist. His works encompassed and interwove through many disciplines. His writing was uncompromising and did not seek agreement and consensus. In his own peculiar way, he sought to write for the sake of humanity and not for cultural bureaucracies.

Much in the same way that Nietzsche shocked Germans with his brazen declamations concerning their 'pathetic' conditions, when read as a '*Flaschenpost*', Adorno deliberately offends and empowers us. He forces us to reevaluate his, and implicitly, to assert our own views. His insights remain rebarbative.

⁵⁴¹ *Prisms*, p. 172.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Introduction

There are two sections to my conclusion of the study of the *Philosophy of Modern Music*. Part One summarises my findings concerning Adorno's rhetoric and insights. Part Two outlines the significance of the study.

Part One

SUMMARY

I

Although in recent years Adorno's alleged prejudices and blind-spots have been the focus of much attention, even derogation, there have been few interdisciplinary works on Adorno's writing. Generally, critical theorists assess Adorno's works on music in terms of their intellectual and literary configurations,⁵⁴² musicologists tend to concentrate on musical issues.⁵⁴³ It is only recently that non-German musicologists such as Subotnik, Paddison, and Williams have pioneered interdisciplinary approaches to his works.

⁵⁴² Despite their highly illuminating insights, without which this study could never have been written, Rose, and Buck-Morss choose not to examine Adorno's musicological writings even though he wrote at least one article per year during 1920 - 1969 on music. Eugene Lunn's article, "Avant-Garde and The Culture Industry," in *Marxism and Modernism*, ed. Eugene Lunn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 149-172 is truly exceptional in its insights on Adorno's treatment of Schoenberg's music and its ties to anti-fascist art.

⁵⁴³ Indeed musical research has become more of an open field within the past twenty years due to the radical investigations of notable scholars. See for example, Raymond Monelle's excellent introduction to *Linguistics and Semiotics in Music* (Chur Reading: Harwood, 1992).

Read as a literal critique of the music of Stravinsky and Schoenberg, *The Philosophy of Modern Music* appears to be elitist, dogmatic and deeply flawed. Read as a fragmented work on the trends of kitsch and avant-garde culture in the twentieth century, Adorno's ideas maintain their dialectical rigour.

As I have shown, *The Philosophy of Modern Music* is not an anachronism in Adorno's opus, but rather a book connected to other studies in psychology, sociology, mass culture, philosophy and music that he conducted during this period.

Adorno claims that artists such as Schoenberg, Picasso, Kandinsky and others furthered the tradition of humanitarian art during the second, third and fourth decades of the twentieth century. By insisting on contemporary experiences, born out of a groundedness in society and the *Zeitgeist*, their cathartic art rebelled against the debilitating impact of state and later, capitalist monopolies.

In contrast, artists such as Stravinsky, Strauss, Breker and others contributed to the devaluation of art. They bought into the values of culture industries that used 'kitsch' art to subjugate the masses and sell products.

Today, the future of art and indeed criticism, and in some ways, individuality and humanity rests with those willing to further culture that enlightens rather than subjugates. It rests with those willing to create works that are experiential, emotionally illuminating and contemporary, works that restore the individual's critical, emotional, and aesthetic faculties.

If there is a distinctly Jewish aspect to Adorno's critique, it rests in his choice of protagonist. Although Schoenberg is an ideal candidate to represent other avant-gardists, when one looks at Adorno's critique

through the 1920s and 1930s, one sees a consistent portrayal of Schoenberg: as a symbol of reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles. Schoenberg was also a means of reconciliation, a means to justify the existence of the Jews in Germany, and later, the world - prior to, during and after the Holocaust.

Although Adorno's portrait of Schoenberg was affected by the Holocaust and his own Jewishness, he managed to transcend this despair, to be cold enough to use Schoenberg and Stravinsky as symbols of larger trends in culture. The merits of his theoretical insights prove themselves by the very fact that they seem, today, more relevant than ever.

II

FLUID TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Adorno transforms the meanings of various concepts and terms through the context in which they are placed especially in relation to the music of Stravinsky and Schoenberg. When one isolates them, their fluid usage becomes more apparent. Below are but a few examples of terms and concepts that change according to context:

autonomy - Stravinsky's music is autonomous in the sense that it is divorced from the enlightenment process. It no longer corresponds to contemporary human experience; Schoenberg's music is also autonomous. It does not succumb to the dictates of imposing, economically-driven, cultural institutions.

beauty - harmonious or 'beautiful' kitsch music is barbaric. Within German and American society it is artificial. Schoenberg's 'barbaric' music is 'beautiful'. It paints contemporary society in all its horror. Its beauty lies in its truth.

communicative art - kitsch music is direct, like propaganda. It encourages passive reception. Schoenberg's music is indirect, cryptical, unlike propaganda. It requires the input of individuals - active reception - and, hence, self-assertion.

domination of musical nature - Stravinsky dominates musical nature, i.e., *affekt*. He creates music that elicits appropriate emotions to manipulate the masses. Schoenberg's music also dominates musical nature. He uses a system that goes beyond the legacy of musical tradition. His dodecaphonic music dominates musical praxis through an artificial system which returns music, ironically, back to the realm of nature.

infantile/child-like music - Stravinsky's music is 'infantile' in that it reveals the composer's own infantilistic tendencies towards the authority of tradition and cultural bureaucracies. His music prompts infantile reactions from the listener. Schoenberg's music is also 'child-like'. It is id-like in its exploration of the unconscious. It requires 'id-like' responses from the listener to 'complete' the fragmented artistic object. In other words, the sound of his 'chaotic' music, at its most successful, impels the listener to make aesthetic sense of its meaning. His music encourages creative participation from the listener.

inhumane music - Stravinsky's humane music is inhumane because it dissociates; it encourages self-annihilation. Schoenberg's inhumane music is humane because it grounds the individual, all the while depicting the horror and inhumanity of the world.

mythical music - Stravinsky's neoclassical music reinforces myths of social and racial superiority. As authoritative music, it is intimately linked to the concept of the domination of internal and external nature as a return to 'tribal' behaviour.⁵⁴⁴ Schoenberg's dodecaphonic music is also mythical. It is guided by instinctual, creative tendencies that crystallises the *Zeitgeist* and returns us to the realm of truly natural.

rational and irrational music - Stravinsky's musical technique relies primarily upon pre-established musical constructs. It is rational because it bears in its architecture compromises towards economic rationalism. Schoenberg's music is also rational in that its design is based on mathematical formulae. It, however, rebels against the mathematical system to reveal the irrationality of economically rational society, and also, the irrationality of the suppression of 'otherness' through economically rational music.

natural art - Natural music, i.e., tonal music in modern society is unnatural. It is out-of-touch with the emotional and spiritual elements that characterise the contemporary social consciousness. Schoenberg's mathematically designed, unnatural music is 'natural' because of the

⁵⁴⁴ Robert Hullot-Kentor writes: "History is therefore a process of its own transformation into nature - in Adorno's alternate formulation - into myth, the condition of necessity from which it is meant to escape, p. x. See Hullot-Kentor's Forward in Adorno's *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, trans. and ed. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1989), pp. x-xxiii.

instinctual, subjective input required to transform the unnatural into the natural.

By using terms and concepts in such a fluid manner, Adorno shatters the rigidified structures of logical-positivist and rationalist thinking. He shows that language must be fluid, and experiential to capture reality in all its fissures and lacunae. Language must not reify meaning as this would contribute to aspects of 'tunnel-vision' and to the denial of experience.

In many ways, Adorno's writing captures those qualities he attributes to avant-garde music. Like the music of Schoenberg, Adorno's writing is individualistic. It does not confine itself to conventional musicological discourse. It is not beautiful or elegant, but aims to be truthful. His writing is often 'mythical' in its failure to respect the immediacy of rational and empirical prose (see chapter two, page 29), and 'irrational' in its use of hyperboles, exaggerations, antinomies, fluid terms, metaphors, allusions, and obscuritisms. Through his gnomic prose, Adorno attempts to capture the *Geist*, the substance of the historical present that often slips through what Terry Eagleton sometimes calls the conceptual net. In his own way, the Frankfurt scholar dominates language to return it to the realm of nature. Above all, his writing aims to be humane and socially responsible.

III

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Following Adorno through his maze first led me into the Hotel Abyss. Miraculously, it also transported me from the Hotel Abyss to 'smack dead' in the middle of what I believe to be a better understanding of

contemporary culture and society. Deciphering his clues led me from musicology to disciplines as distant as social and political thought. As Adorno once told Lowenthal, "For in principle I represent the antispecialist attitude . . . specialisation, indeed, has its dangers, particularly in the isolation we find ourselves."⁵⁴⁵

Through his own style, Adorno suggests to us a model in which criticism may become more a means of provoking individuality and less a means of extinguishing individuality, of empowering the reader, rather than reifying the reader's perceptions.⁵⁴⁶

By unpacking Adorno's claims regarding kitsch and avant-garde culture, we may come to further recognise those aspects of commodified culture that may have led us astray, in some respects, from meaningful art. We may continue to appreciate and foster works that help us to reclaim the critical, humanitarian voice. It is hoped that the study:

1. By its interdisciplinary approach, it endorses the current trend of musicological criticism which uses research from any pertinent field, regardless of discipline, in the hermeneutic enterprise.
2. Provides a practical model and a praxis with which to approach Adorno's writings on music. Such a model or approach may assist in the clarification of the many misconceptions that presently surround Adorno's musicology and may assist in the understanding of the *Philosophy of Modern Music*.
3. Sheds light on the current debate in critical theory over Adorno's prejudices - from a musicologist's perspective. I show that while Adorno

⁵⁴⁵ Recollections of Adorno, p. 161.

⁵⁴⁶ Adorno's approach aligns to the most recent pedagogical approaches in America that stress self-discovery, interaction, and the avoidance of treating the student as an 'empty vessel'. See for example, Robert Young's *A Critical Theory of Education: Habermas and our Children's Educational Future* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989).

was deeply affected by the horrible fate of the Jews, he managed, somehow to transcend these reactions. With a certain 'coldness' but without 'self-denial', he maintained his critical faculties.

4. Suggests the merits of interdisciplinary criticisms.
5. Promotes a revaluation of Adorno's importance to musical scholarship.
6. Provides certain guidelines concerning modern music that may lead to further discussion over the issue of 'responsible art' and 'responsible criticism'.

When Lowenthal suggested that perhaps their writing would not survive their era, Adorno (1954) replied :

I would like to say that I fundamentally do not adhere to the conviction that our works will become outdated for external or thematic reasons a couple of years after they were written; for the emphasis of what we are doing lies . . . in a theory of society and not in ephemeral material.

Lowenthal adds (1983), "I have heard at the same time a theme which may resonate longer than our critics would like to concede."⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁷ *Critical Theory*, p. 71.

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